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Aspects of Sufism in  
the Sudan

by

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### ABSTRACT

This thesis is an attempt to study aspects of Sufism in the Sudan . It describes the Sufi Orders that existed in the Sudan and their relation to the major Islamic Sufi Orders .

The introduction of Sufism in the Sudan has been largely connected with the introduction of Islam . A historical outline of the pre-Islamic Sudan and the gradual process of conversion to Islam is provided .

The religious role of Sufism in the Sudan is discussed together with its social and political impact on the society .

The life and the teachings of Shaikh al-'Ubaid b. Baḍr are presented as an example of a Sudanese Sufi Shaikh and his <sup>taxiqah</sup>taxiqah .

As a whole the thesis focuses on the distinctive features characterising Sufism in its Sudanese context .

### Acknowledgement

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## PREFACE

The thesis consists of five chapters. The origins of Sufism are discussed in chapter one. A sketch of the essential Sufi doctrines and the development of Sufism is presented.

Chapter two is a historical description of the religious situation in the Sudan before the introduction of Islam and Sufism. It also discusses the penetration of Islam and the activities of the first Sufis who arrived in the Sudan.

Chapter three discusses the major Sufi *tā'ifas* which were introduced into the Sudan, their method of organization and ritual.

Chapter four is a study of a Sudanese Sufi, Shaikh al-'Ubaid b. Badr. It is intended as an example of a *ṭarīqah*, studying in particular its features and characteristics in relation to the mother-*ṭarīqas* of which this Shaikh was an affiliate.

In conclusion, chapter five discusses the religious, social and political influences of Sufism in the Sudan, the various social and political upheavals which took place and their effect upon Sufi activity. An assessment of the situation of the Sufi *tā'ifas* and their prospect within these changes is included.

Maps of the Sudan showing some of the regions mentioned in the text are appended.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE ORIGINS OF SUFISM

Sufism is defined in many different ways. From an etymological point it is connected with 'suf' wool. This is because the earlier Sufis wore woollen garments as a sign of their renunciation of luxurious worldly life. Another derivation of the word may be 'safā' - purity - related to the Sufis endeavour to purify their souls from all evils. Sufism is in principle a religious way of life initiated by persons whose spiritual disposition is set into action by the realisation and awareness of three important aspects.

The first is the absolute sovereignty of the Absolute Reality i.e. Allah. The second is the reality of Man as a representative of the Divine reality and his nothingness together with other manifestations, beside this Reality. The third aspect is Man's task to rise to his essential nature and reach the stage in which he realises that all the apparent differences are aspects and manifestations 'mazāhir' of the One Being and the One Truth. The Sufis call this the piercing of the veil "kashf al hijāb" and the realisation of the oneness of being 'wahdat al-wujūd'.

Another aspect which inspired the Sufis is their realisation of the reality of Islam. Islam is the final intervention of the Divine for man's salvation. In general it is intended for all the people, "O people! I am the messenger of Allah to you all".<sup>1</sup> "A warner to all the nations".<sup>2</sup> "We have not sent Thee but as mercy for all the nations".<sup>3</sup>

1. Qur'ān VII (158)

2. Qur'ān XXV (1)

3. Qur'ān XXI (107)

Since the men are of different varieties of aptitude and readiness, Islam is manifested in a very flexible form so that it can deal efficiently with these differences. In addition Islam constitutes an inner esoteric aspect which is accessible only to individual souls of certain penetration and ability. Accordingly the Sufis consider Islam as the source of nourishment and the origin of their doctrine. They believe that Sufism is the inner spirit of Islam. The Qur'ān and the life of the Prophet 'peace be upon him' and his companions form the foundations of Sufism.

The Qur'ān as the eternal and immutable word of Allah addresses all the people and it is an all-embracing system covering all the aspects of human existence. This is why it has inspired the Sufis. For the Sufi the Qur'ān does not merely mean the utterance of written words, but rather a sound understanding and deep penetration to a hidden meaning in these words. This is because the Qur'ān is addressing various levels of human consciousness and perception and the spiritual light its words convey is only limited in so far as the intelligence of the recipient is limited. Those who have a sublime intelligence which enables them to appreciate the hidden meanings of the Qur'ān are those who are under Divine protection. "Allah leadeth to His light who He wills".<sup>1</sup>

Even those of average perception may discover that the Qur'ān provides a deep understanding of both the reality of worldly life and the after-life. It is clear that the Qur'ān stresses the futility and mortality of the sensuous life as compared with the eternal happiness for the spiritual soul in the after-life.

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1. Qur'ān XXIV (35)



"Every soul will taste of death".<sup>1</sup> "Nothing is the life of the world save a past-time and a sport. Better by far is the abode of the Hereafter for those who keep their duty to Allah - Have you then no sense?"<sup>2</sup> "O children of Adam! If messengers of your own come unto you who narrate unto you My revelations, then whosoever refraineth from evil and amendeth, there shall be no fear come upon Them neither shall they grieve". "But They who deny our revelations and scorn them - such are rightful owners of the Fire; They will abide therein".<sup>3</sup> The Qur'ān is always appealing to souls through such comparisons between the two worlds and thus instilling into souls the sense of shrinking from the worldly life and a tendency towards the spiritual life in order to succeed in the after-life.

The verses which are said to have inspired the Sufis most are: "Wheresoever you turn, there is the Face of Allah"<sup>4</sup> "Everything perishes but His Face"<sup>5</sup> "All that is therein suffereth extinction, and there remaineth the Face of Thy Lord full of majesty and bounty"<sup>6</sup>

These verses imply the everlasting and eternal presence of Allah. Other verses which inspired the Sufis in the same way are the verses indicating Allah's nearness. "We are nearer to him than his jugular vein"<sup>7</sup> "We are nearer to him than you are, although you see not"<sup>8</sup>.

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1. Qur'ān III (185)

2. Qur'ān VI (32)

3. Qur'ān VII (35-36)

4. Qur'ān I (115)

5. Qur'ān XXVIII (88)

6. Qur'ān LV (26-27)

7. Qur'ān L (16)

8. Qur'ān LVI (85)

"He is the First and the Last and the outwardly manifest and the inwardly hidden".<sup>1</sup>

Once the Sufi attains to a full realisation of Allah's eternal existence and nearness in addition to self-realisation, he will eventually develop a sense of fear 'taqwā' before Allah, an element so essential in Sufism. The Fear 'taqwā' is reiterated in the Qur'ān; "O you who believe. Observe your duty to Allah with the right Observance"<sup>2</sup> "O mankind! Keep your duty to Allah and fear a day when the parent will not be able to avail the child in anything nor the child to avail the parent. Allah's promise is the very truth. Let not the life of the world beguile you, nor let the deceiver beguile you in regard to Allah".<sup>3</sup>

In all these verses is combined a stress on the importance of the Fear of Allah together with the consequences that follow. In addition to the apparent meaning, they also contain that spiritual inner meaning which can only be appreciated by a spiritual soul. Fear of Allah is brought about by what the Sufis call meditation, 'tafakkur or ta'ammul'. In this case also the Sufis used the Qur'ān as their source. "Herein are protents for people who take thought",<sup>4</sup> is a theme which is contained in many Suras. The Sufis speak of the Tranquil Self 'nafs mutma'inna'. It is the self which is always meditating on every aspect which reflects and reveals Allah's greatness. For the Sufis acquiring the Tranquil Self is a step towards the scrutinising or the Upbraiding Self 'nafs lawwāmah'. The realisation of Allah's greatness through meditation leads the Sufi to

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1. Qur'ān LVII (3)

2. Qur'ān III (102)

3. Qur'ān XXXI (31-33)

4. Qur'ān XIII (3)

protents?  
signs?

scrutinise himself for failure to rise to this greatness. The result of self-scrutiny is apparently an intuitive fear 'taqwā'.

Another feature of Sufism which is derived from the Qur'ān is Rememberance 'dhikr Allah'. "Rememberance of Allah is more important"<sup>1</sup> "Remember Me, I will remember you"<sup>2</sup> "And do thou remember the Lord within thyself humbly and with awe, quietly, at morn and evening. And be Thou not of the heedless"<sup>3</sup> "O you who believe! Remember Allah with much remembrance"<sup>4</sup> The Sufis practice remembrance both in solitude 'khalwah' or in the 'dhikr' session 'halqat al-dhikr' which is said to be an aid for intensive concentration. The Sufis regard 'dhikr' as a direct means of approach to Allah. The Verse "Invoke in remembrance the Name of Thy Lord, and devote thyself to him with an utter devotion,"<sup>5</sup> includes in a succinct way all Sufic practice. It focuses together all ritual elements i.e. the continuous invocation of the Divine Name, and the individual's effort to attain a nearness to Allah 'tabattul'. The 'dhikr' also constitutes the invocation of all the Divine Names and the recitation of the Qur'ān. In addition there are litanies peculiar to each Order 'tarīqah' formulated by the Shaikh. These contain quotations from the Qur'ān and the traditions and are known in all the tarīqas as 'awrād'.

The basic doctrine of Sufism is the Oneness of being 'wahdat al wujūd' which is implicit in the verses referred to on page 7. This Doctrine

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1. Qur'ān XXIX (45)
  2. Qur'ān I (152)
  3. Qur'ān VII (205)
  4. Qur'ān XXXIII (41)
  5. Qur'ān LXXIII (8)

is contained in what al-Ghazālī<sup>1</sup> said about the Sufis. He said that the gnostics rise from the lowlands of metaphor to the peak of verity; and at the fulfilment of their ascent they see directly, face to face, that there is nothing in existence save only Allah and that everything perishes but His Face. He also said that "each thing has two faces, a face of its own and a face of its lord; in respect of its own face it is nothingness, and in respect of its Lord's face it is being". Hence there is nothing in existence save only Allah and His Face. This oneness of being involves a conflict between the sensual worldly self and the spiritual soul. Unless the soul dominates the existence of the body the initiate won't be able to appreciate this divine Oneness. It is self that makes a veil 'hijāb' between the soul and illumination. The outward aspect of existence 'al wujūd' beguiles the soul and veils it from the inward aspect of existence i.e. the Divine. This is the divine oneness; the outward aspect of existence is existence - al wujūd - and behind it is the Divine Reality. The world - al wujūd - is only a manifestation - mazhar - of Allah's presence. When a person is absorbed in the outward aspect only, he is concerned with his and the world's existence. Although he acknowledges Allah's presence yet he is only doing this formally. When one ascends from 'the lowlands of metaphor to the peak of verity' like the Sufis, he will be concerned with the inward aspect of all existence. The immortal in him will escape from the mortal limitations. At this stage one will see nothing in the creation 'khalq' but a manifestation and the very evidence of the existence of the Creator. Here again the Sufis used the Qur'ān as their source. "In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of night and day, and the ships which run upon the sea

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1. Al-Ghazālī: Mishkāṭ al anwār P. (113-4)

with that which is of use to people, and the water which Allah sendeth down from the sky, thereby reviving the earth after its death, and dispersing all kinds of beasts therein, and (in) the ordinance of the winds, and the clouds obedient between heaven and earth: are signs 'āyāt' of Allah's sovereignty' for people who have sense."<sup>1</sup>

As regards the position of Man in the universe, he is intended to be Allah's vicegrent on earth. This is clear in the verse: "And when Thy lord said unto the angels: I am about to place a viceroy on the earth, they said: Wilt Thou place therein one who will do harm and shed blood, while we, we hymn thy praise and sanctify Thee? He said: Surely I know that which ye know not".<sup>2</sup>

The Sufi idea of Man is taken directly from this verse. Thus Man's creation for him is not in vain. Man is the representative of the Divine Reality in the universe. Being such he is at once an embodiment of both the Divine and creaturely realities. He is a servant or rather a slave with a certain mission to fulfill. This mission was not imposed upon him but he accepted it by his own choice. "We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it. He hath proved a tyrant and a fool".<sup>3</sup>

From this Man's relation to the universe is seen as that of a treasurer to a treasure. The universe is a trust 'amanah', and Man accepted the offer of looking after this trust. Thus Man is directly responsible to Allah in the world. This direct responsibility made man fitted to receive

1. Qur'ān, I (164)

2. Qur'ān, II (30)

3. Qur'ān, XXXIII (72)

instructions and rules in order to undertake it. This is why man was not left alone, but was instructed throughout time. He was provided with potentialities which if fully realised can make of him the being Allah intends him to be. Following accurately the instructions he is given man can prove himself responsible and trustworthy and at the same time he will be true to his divine trust.

Throughout the history there have been low periods in the life of Man. These were times when man was dominated by his material and sensual existence and tended to live heedless of his real position. These were also the times when the Divine Reality, through mercy and grace, intervened to save Man. This intervention is manifested in the form of chosen personalities who act both as transmitters of revelation and bringers of human salvation. It is intended to remind Man of his true origin and lift him to new heights of self-realisation and well being.

The reality of the universe for which Man as such is responsible is realised by the Sufis in the way indicated in the Qur'ān. The universe with all that it constitutes is an evidence 'āyah', indicating nothing but the existence of the Creator. "In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the difference of night and day are tokens for men of understanding. For those who remember Allah standing, sitting and reclining, and meditate on the creation of the heavens and the earth. O lord! Thou hast not created this in vain. Glory be to Thee! Preserve us from the doom of fire".<sup>1</sup> "Will they not regard the camels how they are created, and the heaven how it is raised, and the hills how they are set up, and the earth how it is spread".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Qur'ān, III (190-1)

2. Qur'ān, LXXXVIII (17-21)

The Sufi, through self-realisation and self-purification, reaches the stage at which he no longer considers the universe as a physical and sensual phenomenon. The created things as manifestations reveal or conceal the Absolute Reality according to the measure of spiritual insight with which they are regarded. Hence the Sufi regards the universe as unreal if it is considered external to Allah and self-subsistent, and as real, only if taken as an aspect of the Real. In other words the Sufi considers these manifestations from the point of their proximity to or distance from the Real.

Although the Sufi's idea of Man and the Universe has given these two concepts their status and texture yet they regard them as nothing compared to their Creator, 'Allah'. Allah for the Sufi, as well as for the ordinary Moslem, is the only creative principle and the ultimate ground for all that exists. There is no absolute reality or truth but Him. This idea is taken from the Divine Name 'al Haqq' as opposed to 'haqq' without the definite article, which refers to the other existences.

In addition to the Qur'ān the other element which provided the Sufis with a prototype for their doctrine is the life of the Prophet 'peace be upon him' and his companions 'sahābah'. Martin Lings says "Although the name Sufism only came to be used after two or three generations of Islam, its reality is rooted in the first generation; and one of its roots may be said to reach back across the threshold of Islam to Muhammad's Pre-Islamic practice of spiritual retreat".<sup>1</sup> Tracing the Prophet's 'sīrah', the story of his life will clearly show that he is the ideal for the Sufis.

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1. Martin Lings, A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century, p.34.

The environment in which the Prophet, peace be upon him, lived was a centre of degraded moral standards and conceptions. The people were mainly pagans. They worshipped stones, trees and idols. For them everything is conceivable except Allah. They knew a little about the teachings of the other Prophets. They had an idea that Abraham and Ishmael were their fore-fathers and that the 'Ka'ba' is the house of worship, built by Abraham for the worship of one God. They called it the house of Allah but the chief object of worship were the idols. In spite of all this they clung to their paganism.

Yet in such a situation appeared some men who felt disgust at this idolatry which had prevailed for centuries, and tried to find out about the teachings of Abraham's religion. These men were known as 'Hunafā' literally meaning those who turn away but its meaning in Qur'ānic context is the 'upright'. They didn't form a community. They were seeking this knowledge individually, each by the light of his own inner consciousness. Of these men was Zayd Ibn 'Amr Ibn Nufayl.

The features of the Hanifs' doctrine was summarised by al-Mas'ūdi,<sup>1</sup> "They believed in the unity of God, acknowledged the existence of a creator, held to the truth of the day of rising and reviving - al ba'th wa'l'mushūr - of the dead, and they were assured that God would reward the obedient and punish the rebellious.

The meaning of the word Hunafā as those who turn away, shows that they withdrew from the life of the pagans. The fact that the Prophet, peace be upon him, met Zayd Ibn 'Amr Ibn Nufayl in the highlands of Mecca shows that these Hanifs practiced complete solitude and abandoned the corrupted society in order to meditate on their own beliefs.

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1. Al-Mas'ūdi, Murūj al-Dhahab (iii), p. 256.



It is clear in the Prophet's Sira that he used to take refuge in the highlands of Mecca, specifically in Mount Hirā, even before he received the message from Allah. This was certainly an influence from the Hanifs. At the age of forty, the Prophet, peace be upon him, developed an inclination towards contemplation in seclusion. He would spend days and weeks in the cave in Mount Hirā, away from the pagan practice and confusion of material life, meditating and pondering over the secret that lies behind the wonder of the universe. He was illiterate, and had no education, as indicated by the Qur'ān, but he hated paganism. He didn't have any formal education in religion but could not believe that idols could have any religious value. He possessed a sensitive mind and serene disposition. He reacted sharply to the distress of his people and kept aloof, occupying himself in prayer and contemplation, in self-examination and reflecting on the problems that troubled him.

Regarding his mental processes and spiritual reactions during this period of seclusion until he received the Divine message it would only be speculation if we try to say what they were. It is not granted to probe into the depth of his soul and appraise its ecstasies. This was a secret between the individual soul and Allah; the Prophet, peace be upon him, never told of what was happening yet what one can say is that those years of isolation were years of preparation when his soul was being deepened, proved and made ready for the heavy responsibility that the Divine Will had decreed should be placed on him. The Qur'ān says of Moses, peace be upon him:

"I wrapped Thee with love for Me, and This I did that Thou mightst be reared before my Eye ..... We proved thee in various ways Then Thou comest up to the standard, O Moses and I chose thee for Myself".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Qur'ān XX (39-41)

The same was said of the Prophet, peace be upon him:

"Did he not find thee an orphan and take thee under His protection? He found thee perplexed in search of Him and guided thee unto Himself. He found thee in want and provided thee with abundance".<sup>1</sup>

This God-consciousness and search for reality was characteristic of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and it is adopted by the Sufis. The Sufis considered the life of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and his Traditions as a guide in their practice depending on the Qur'ānic verses: "Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example 'Uswah hasanah' for him who looketh unto Allah and the last Day, and remembereth Allah much"<sup>2</sup> "Say O Muhammad: If ye love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful".<sup>3</sup> "Whoso obeyeth the messenger, obeyeth Allah"<sup>4</sup>. The Sufis consider the Prophet, peace be upon him, as the light which leads them to the knowledge of Allah; so the initiate must first trace his practice to the Prophet, peace be upon him, in order to reach his goal.

The Tradition which sums up all the Sufic doctrine and Practice is the holy Tradition: "My slave ceaseth not to draw nigh unto Me with devotions of his free will until I love him; and when I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, and his sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he smites, and his foot with which he walks"<sup>5</sup>

The companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him, are also an ideal

1. Qur'ān XCIII (7-9)

2. Qur'ān XXXIII (21)

3. Qur'ān III (31)

4. Qur'ān IV (80)

5. al-Nawawī, Riād al-sālihīn from Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī by abī Hurairah

for the Sufis. The Sufis have the idea that their spiritual descent is directly linked to the Prophet, peace be upon him, and hence they regard the companions as forming a chain which should be traced in order to reach the Prophet. The companions attitude which affected the Sufis is summed up by Ibn Khaldoun:<sup>1</sup>

"The way of life adopted by the Sufis was in force from the beginning of Islam. The most eminent of the Companions and their disciples considered it to be the way of truth and guidance. It was based upon devotion and separation to God and the renunciation of the pomps and vanities of this world, and the reckoning as nothing pleasures and riches and fame; and it included retreat for purposes of devotion. Nothing was more common among the Companions and others of the faithful in the earliest times".

The people who followed the Qur'ān and the Prophet and his Companions later on, are called the Sufis only as an identification from among the people who deviated from the right way.

From this it is clear that essentially Sufism is based on the Qur'ān, the Prophet's life, peace be upon him, and his Companions.

Tracing the history of Sufism it may be noticed that there were three phases. The first was that of the early Sufis starting with the Prophet, peace be upon him, his Companions 'sahāba', and their companions 'tabi'ūn'. The second phase was the Salafi movement. This was formed by those who based their religious approach on Qur'ān and Sunna as opposed to those who inclined towards the speculative approaches and subordinated religion to them. The third phase was that of the Exponents. These were the Sufis who, in addition to the Sufic practice, composed mystical formulations and poems. Their mystical output was essentially esoteric.

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1. Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*(iii) pp.59-60.

With the exception of the first generation of Islam these movements were contemporaneous. The leading personalities in each group got into contact with the others through discussions, either attacking or supporting their claims.

The first group, the early Sufis, were concerned with practice and guidance within Islamic confines. The first generation was that of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and his Companions. This group represents the spiritual summit for all the other groups, however approaches to it may differ. Having the Prophet himself as their guide the Companions wasted no time in formulating their experience. They were deeply involved in a spirituality heightened by their anxiety and expectation of Divine Revelation through their spiritual leader. Many Verses were revealed to show them the right and the wrong, because they were participating in the Prophetic responsibility. The verses 140-175 in *Āl Imrān* are the best example of this Divine guidance for the Companions. In the battle of Uhud when it was said that the Prophet, peace be upon him, had been killed the Moslems retreated and their morale was about to fail them. Allah blamed them for this "Muhammad is but a messenger, like the messengers who have passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dieth or is slain, ye will turn back on your heels? He who turneth back doth no hurt to Allah, and Allah will reward the thankful".<sup>1</sup>

The Companions' Companions 'tābi'ūn' followed in the steps of their predecessors, depending in their spiritual nourishment on the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*.

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1. *Qur'ān* III (144)

The Islamic world, by the end of the first century A.H., started to pass from that spiritual and political stability which the Prophet, peace be upon him, and his four Caliphs had established. This situation reached its peak by the 'Abbasid Caliphate when the dominant feature was the appearance of different religious and political sects.

At this time from among the strong tide and confusion of speculations emerged men who succeeded in keeping themselves unaffected by current events and who, by keeping themselves within the Islamic limits, were able to retain for Sufism its earlier glory.

One of these men was 'Alī b. al-Ḥusain b. 'Alī (Zain al-'Ābidīn) (d. 92 A.H.). His Sufic behaviour was said to be inspired by the death of his father al-Ḥusain b. 'Alī b. Abu Ṭālib. To him is related the teachings concerning the two Sufic states *ghurba* 'strangeness' and *huzn* 'sadness'. The first state means that a Sufi should not consider the world as his, and should live in it like a stranger. By introducing these two states Zain al-'Ābidīn laid the foundation for many developments in asceticism. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī for example adopted the state of 'ghurba' and added to it the state of fear.<sup>1</sup>

Zain al-'Ābidīn grandson, Ja'far as-Ṣādiq (d. 148 A.H) was considered as the first to innovate the concept of 'ma'rifa', knowledge. This was based on what he said when he was asked why God was no longer answering the people's invocations. He said: "because they are invoking whom they do not know."<sup>2</sup>

1. 'Abd al-Qādir Maḥmūd, *Al-Falsafah as-Sūfiyya fi al-Islam*, p. 152

2. 'Abd al-Qādir Maḥmūd, *al-Falsafah as-Sūfiyya fi al-Islam*, p. 156

Another significant development was brought about by Rābi'ah al-'Adawiyyah (d. 801 A.D.). Rābi'ah adopted the Islamic Sufic approach of her predecessors and she formulated the doctrine of love as essential for the attainment of knowledge of God 'ma'rifa'. Her mystical teachings led many to regard her as a deviation from the norm of the early Sufis and the beginning of the speculative trend.

The beginning of the third Century A.H. had also witnessed a group of Sufis who pursued their mystical experience beyond Islamic limits. The most outstanding figure at this time was al-Hārith al-Muhāsibī (d. 243 A.H.) Al-Muhāsibī was considered as the first of the early Sufis who assimilated the mystical output of those before him and produced a new mystical approach which embodied philosophical formulations. His efforts were regarded as the basis on which later Sunni Sufis like al-Junaid and al-Ghazālī based their studies.<sup>1</sup>

In the second half of the third century A.H. speculative studies and religious discussions were at their peak. One of the most important subjects discussed was the Qur'ān. The question concerning it was whether the Qur'ān was created or not. This problem was between the fuqahā' led by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and the Mu'tazilah. This was also the time when the element of speculation entered into Sufism. Some Sufis of this period were able to survive this era and their Sufic experience though contained the philosophical element yet it remained purely Islamic. This is why they are listed in the group of the early Sufis.

Of these were Sāri al-Saqatī (d. 275 A.H.), Abū Sa'īd al-Kharāz (d. 279 A.H.), Sahl at-Tustari (d. 283 A.H.) and al-Nūrī (d. 295 A.H.). The leading personalities in this group were al-Junaid (d. 297 A.H.),

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1. 'Abd al-Qādir Mahmūd, al-Falsafa as-Suffiyya fi al-Islam, p. 176.

and al-Warāq (d. 320 A.H.).

All these Sufis introduced the philosophical element in their writings on Sufic experience but they kept themselves within the limits of the Qur'ān and Sunna. From this time onward the history of Sufism was dominated by Sufis who were pushed with the tide of speculation until later on in the fifth century A.H. the Sufic beliefs were brought again to their Islamic origins by the Sufi and theologian Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505 A.H.).

The Salafī movement dated back to Muqātil b. Sulaimān (d. 150 A.H.), and Muhammad Ibn Karam (d. 255 A.H.). Muqātil school had a branch led by Imām Mālik Ibn Anas (d. 179 A.H.) and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (d. 241 A.H.). The prominent figure in this movement was al-Harawī al-Ansārī (d. 481 A.H.), who is regarded as the first to introduce philosophy in the Salafī approach. A later Salafī protagonist was Ibn Taimiyah who lived in the seventh century A.H.

The third movement was that of the exponents. This movement ran parallel to the Salafī movement and there was much dispute between them. The first in this group was Dhū't Nūn al Misrī (d. 245 A.H.) but the first to crystalize the speculative element in Sufism was Abu Yazīd al-Bistāmī (d. 261 A.H.). Al-Bistāmī was considered the first to innovate the concept of Fanā' (extinction). Al-Hallāj developed al-Bistāmī's formulations and went further in declaring the concept of incarnation (ḥulūl) which implied the unity with the Divine, a thing which resulted in his crucifixion in 309 A.H. Of the followers of al-Hallāj were al-Tirmidhī (d. 320 A.H.) who innovated the concept of the seal of awliyā (saints), Al-Shibli (d. 334 A.H.), al-Nīfārī (d. 354 A.H.) and Farid al-Din al-'Attār (d. 586).<sup>1</sup>

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1. 'Abd al-Qādir Maḥmūd, al-Falsafah as-Sūfiyya fī al-Islām, p. 309.

Among the exponents who took a different approach was al-Sahrawardī (d. 587 A.H.) who innovated the theory of emanation. Of his later followers was al-Shirāzī (d. 1040 A.H.). The most outstanding of the exponents was Muḥy al Din Ibn al-'Arabī, author of al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyya, (Meccan Revelations). He lived in Andalusia and died about 638 A.H.

He was the innovator of the theories of the Oneness of Being and the perfect Man. The Sufis who were influenced by Ibn al-'Arabī were

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Ibn al-Fārid (d. 632 A.H.) and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī (d. 672)

the famous Sufi poets in the East. Of his followers in Andalusia were Ibn Sab'īn (d. 667 A.H.) and al-Shushtarī (d. 668 A.H.).

The exponents' movement provoked the Islamic Orthodoxy and resulted in a chasm between it and Sufism. This led to the dissociation of the Sufis for a considerable time from the religious field and encouraged the condemnation of the Sufis indiscriminately. The relation between the Sufis and theologians remained unfriendly except when some theologians adopted Sufism and lessened the friction. Of these were al-Sulamī, al-Qushairī and the final triumph by al-Ghazālī.

The organisation of the Sufis into orders started as early as the sixth century A.H. when 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī founded his order.<sup>1</sup> The formation of the orders passed from the stage of solidarity to the stage of disintegration. Although this secured for the founder his fame and glory yet it contributed to the decline of the order in general. This doesn't apply to the famous orders which continued to operate through their supporters up to the present.

The process of formation actually started by the founder around whom the disciples accumulated. These at first were itinerant groups. Then

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1. J.S. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p. 193.



follow the formation of centres for permanent settlement, and these took their characteristic names according to the environment in which they existed. Hence were the names Ribāt, Zāwiyah and Khalwah. This settlement resulted in crystalizing the status of the founder. The founder or his Khalīfah was responsible for guidance. This gave rise to the principle that the seeker should seek his Path under the guidance of a Shaikh otherwise he would be led by (Iblīs) the Devil. This formed the Tariqah 'Path' which usually retains the name of its founder.

If the founder had a son or a relative who is spiritually qualified he could succeed him after his death, otherwise a suitable initiate could be chosen as his Khalīfah. Another feature in the formation of the orders was the appearance of derivative tariqahs. From the main tariqah some individuals may found their independent tariqahs bearing their names depending either on their parental or spiritual link with the original founder.

The famous Sufi orders are the Suhrawardiyya Rifā'iyya, Qādiriyya, Samūsiyya or Idrīsiyyah, Tijāniyyah and Shādhiliyyah. These orders branched into numerous branches all over the Islamic world and played a major role in spreading Islam in non-Islamic regions e.g. Africa and India.

Every tariqah operates on lines of its own except for the essentials of the operation which seemed to be shared by them all. The nucleus of the tariqah is the founder or the Shaikh who has the absolute authority over the whole organisation. He is venerated both for his authoritative status and as a source of benediction 'barakah'. The disciples constitute two classes, those who seek initiation to reach the Sufic goals 'perfect knowledge of Allah' and the others were only disciples for the sake of barakah. The first group is concerned with the elaborate practice of

initiation while the others are concerned with the service of the organisation.

They all lead a family-like life in the centre. They have a self-contained building comprising the mosque, rooms for teaching the Qur'ān and a sufficient number of rooms to serve as hostels for settlers and visitors as well. The Shaikh's residence if not inside the building is not far from it. The organisation depends in living on their own. The disciples in the service cultivate the land and provide for living. They have their own animals in addition to gifts and alms brought to the Shaikh. When the Shaikh is dead his tomb is built inside or nearby the main building. It becomes a holy place to be visited and the Shaikh's barakah is thought to be continuing even after his death.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE COMING OF ISLAM AND SUFISM TO THE SUDAN

The term Sudan was formerly used to denote the area in Africa extending from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea in the east, and from the southern borders of the Sahara in the north up to the equator in the south. The historical events which took place since the year 1876, the year in which the first European conference concerning the future of Africa was held at Brussels in Belgium,<sup>1</sup> resulted in the partition of this part of the continent into smaller regions among the European powers. The only part which retained the former name 'Sudan' is the recent Republic of the Sudan which was formerly known as the Nilotic Sudan. This is the country which is bordered by Egypt in the north, Chad and Central Africa in the west, Uganda in the south, and Ethiopia Eritrea and the Red Sea in the east.

The religious situation in the Sudan before the coming of Islam is made up of two phases. The first phase was that of Paganism and the second phase was that of Christianity. As regards the first phase, the whole country was dominated by paganism<sup>2</sup> up to the year 453 C.E. The people worshipped animals, trees and stones. They erected temples for the things they worshipped. They also regarded the Nile as sacred and they often sacrificed animals or human beings for it.

During this phase the country had two political systems, the equatorial region which is divided into smaller areas by the numerous tributaries of the Nile was based on the tribal system. Hence the absence of

1. Mahmūd Brelvi: Islam in Africa p.17.

2. Hasan Ahmed Mahmūd: Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa Part (I) p.307.

any centralised state or kingdom which might have engaged itself in activities outside the borders of the Sudan. The savanah region had seen the rise of many strong kingdoms which were always in contact with Egypt in peace or war. The last pagan kingdom in this region was the kingdom of Merowe<sup>1</sup> 300 C.E. The end of this kingdom was brought about by the invasion of the first Christian king of Axum 'Abbysinia', Frumentius.<sup>2</sup> Thus the end of this pagan kingdom was the end of paganism at least in this part of the Sudan. It was also the beginning of the Christian phase.

The Christian invasion of the pagan kingdom of Merowe resulted in the emergence of three kingdoms, Alawah, Muqarrah and al-Maris.<sup>3</sup> Since the Axumite church of Ethiopia was a branch of the church of Egypt,<sup>4</sup> the Egyptians didn't find any difficulty in introducing Christianity into these kingdoms. This was done under the supervision of the Empress Theodora of the Byzantine Empire in Egypt. This activity started at the end of the fifth century C.E., and by the sixth century C.E.<sup>5</sup> this part of the country bordering Egypt embraced Christianity as the state religion. Churches were built and the religious affairs were mainly connected with the Church of Alexandria in Egypt. This was the only part of the Sudan which became completely Christian.

Part of this savanah region which extends between the Nile and the Red Sea also embraced Christianity but it was not predominant. This may

1. Mahmūd Brelvi, Islam in Africa, p.155.

2. Same Reference p.155.

3. Edited by I.M.Lewis, Islam in Tropical Africa, p.144.

4. T.W.Arnold, The Preaching of Islam, p.113.

5. T.W.Arnold, The Preaching of Islam, p.109.

be because the inhabitants of this region 'the Beja' were mainly nomads and they had no centralised state.

The Equatorial region was also kept out of any Christian influence up until the nineteenth century because transportation was difficult owing to the heavy rains and the un-navigable tributaries of the Nile. An important point concerning this region is that although Christianity and Islam reached this region in the nineteenth century, paganism is still prevalent among some tribes. This was the religious situation in the Sudan before the coming of Islam.

Islam penetrated into the Sudan through three major inlets.<sup>1</sup> The first was from Egypt, from the North. The second was from Arabia through Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and the Red Sea. The third was from North-West Africa from the West. Each of these routes has its special significance and effect in the Sudan. The first route, i.e. from Egypt through the North was mostly important for generally Islamising and Arabising the Christian Nubians of the North. The second route was significant for spreading Islam in the Eastern part of the country by the process of infiltration among the nomads. The third route was significant, in addition to spreading Islam in the Western region, for introducing into the Sudan the element of organised and consolidated Islamic conversion in the form of individual teachers and religious orders. Although Islamic activities through this route started as late as the sixteenth century,<sup>2</sup> yet its contribution to Islamic penetration was of far-reaching consequence in the history of Sufism in the Sudan, as will be shown later.

1. Hasan Ahmed Mahmūd, *Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa*, p.304.

2. J.S. Trimmingham, *A History of Islam in Africa*, p.139.

The penetration of Islam through the first route started after the Moslems had subdued Egypt and brought it under Islamic control in 640 C.E. For strategic and security measures 'Amr Ibn al- $\bar{A}$ s, Governor of Egypt, sent 'Uqbah Ibn Nāfi' on an expedition to invade the Northern Sudan in 641 C.E.<sup>1</sup> This invasion led to the unity of the two Christian kingdoms of Muqarraḥ and al-Marīḥ into one kingdom named Muqarraḥ.<sup>2</sup> By this unity, the Muqarraḥ kingdom became very strong and resisted bravely the Islamic invasion. This strong resistance forced 'Uqbah to conclude a peace treaty with the Nubians and abandon the region. The Nubians violated this treaty many times, a thing which persuaded the Moslems to prepare another expedition. This time the army was headed by 'Abdallāḥ Ibn Sa'ād Ibn Abu al-Sarḥ in 651 C.E.<sup>3</sup> The Moslems invaded the country and penetrated far into the South. They reached Dongolah, the capital,<sup>4</sup> and destroyed its church, yet it was not a decisive victory, for the Nubians continued to resist.

The Moslems suggested a peace treaty and the Nubians accepted the offer because both sides realised the necessity for this peace. The Moslems realised that the Nubians were formidable and that they couldn't be subdued by force. But the most essential reason for preferring peace was the situation in the West. The conquered Byzantine army of Egypt started rebuilding its naval forces along the Libyan coasts<sup>5</sup> in order to attack the Moslems in Egypt. Therefore the Moslems considered it reasonable not to

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1. Ḥasan Ibrāḥīm Ḥasan, *Intishār al-Islām fī al-Qārat al-Ifriqiyyah*, p.24.

2. Edited by I.M.Lewis, *Islam in Tropical Africa*, p.113.

3. Ḥasan Aḥmad Maḥmūd, *Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa*, p.310.

4. Edited by I.M.Lewis, *Islam in Tropical Africa*, p.146.

5. Ḥasan Aḥmad Maḥmūd, *Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa*, p.309.

engage themselves on the Nubian front, but rather to concentrate their power in the Western campaigns. The Christian Nubians also realised that the mother church, of which their church was a branch, was under Islamic control, so they saw no point in continuing to resist the Moslems without any external support.

Thus the two parties signed a peace treaty known as the Baqt Treaty.<sup>1</sup> The contents of this treaty laid the foundation for the future domination of Islam in the Sudan. The most significant part of it was that which granted the subjects of each side the right to travel freely and safely in the other's domain. It also safeguarded the lives of Moslems and the security of the first mosque in the Sudan built in Dongolah.<sup>2</sup> The justice done to the Nubians in this treaty made it long lasting.

The Nubians were given full religious freedom and they were allowed to continue their relationship with the church of Alexandria in their religious affairs. The treaty regulated the relations between the two parties and it lasted unviolated for six centuries<sup>3</sup> a time long enough to help the penetration of Islam into the Sudan.

The peaceful penetration of Islam into the Sudan was brought about by two main elements. The first was the flourishing trade activities between Egypt and the Sudan, and the other was the immigrants.

The Moslems of Arabia were either merchants or nomads. The peaceful relations and the security the peace treaty granted encouraged the Moslems to come to the Northern Sudan for trade or pastures. The fact that there was a mosque in Dongolah shows that some Moslems were settled in the country. This also indicates that settlement in the country was not

1. Hasan Ibrāhīm Hasan, *Intishār al-Islam fī al-Qārat al-Ifriqiya*, p.139.

2. Hasan Ibrāhīm Hasan, *Intishār al-Islam fī al-Qārat al-Ifriqiya*, p.141.

3. Trimingham, *The Influence of Islam upon Africa*, p.22.

prohibited by the Nubian authority. The Nubians could also go to Egypt. The Moslem leaders in Egypt employed the Nubians in their armies because they were famous as warriors.<sup>1</sup> These Nubians could be influenced by Islam and on coming home they influenced their people.

The immigrants were also an element in the process of Islamisation. The Northern Sudan served as a refugee centre for all the Moslems escaping from Egypt when political troubles occurred there. All the political changes that took place from the last days of the Ummayyads up to the Mamlūk regime in the thirteenth century C.E. resulted in the immigration of larger numbers of Moslems. The fact that the Moslem leaders of the Tulunids, Ikhshids and the Fatimids exterminated the Arabs and employed the Turks, Persians and Nubians instead,<sup>2</sup> encouraged this immigration southward.

These immigrants settled in the country, intermarried with the original inhabitants and became part of the community. This intermarriage was also an element of the Islamisation and Arabisation of the Sudan.

The Moslem numbers increased to the extent that they formed principalities in Northern Sudan.<sup>3</sup> This development was achieved by Moslems who immigrated in tribal units. One of these were Banū Rabī'ah<sup>4</sup> who later came to be known as the Kanzis and whose descendants are still in Northern Sudan. Members of this tribe intermarried with the Nubian Royal families, hence Islamic influence started to establish itself among the ruling classes.

1. Lewis, Islam in Tropical Africa, p.146.

2. Hasan Ahmad Mahmūd, Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa, p.314.

3. Hasan Ahmad Mahmūd, Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa, p.318.

4. Hasan Ibrahim Hasan, Intishār al-Islām fī al-Qārat al-Ilfrīqiya, p.146.



The tribal immigration continued unhindered under the protection of the peace treaty and the friendly relations between Egypt and the Sudan. The process of Islamisation by the immigrants continued peacefully for six centuries. This long period of time allowed the Moslems to establish themselves and to become an inseparable part of the country.

By the thirteenth century when the Mamluk dynasty began ruling Egypt this peaceful relationship with the Sudan started to change. The Mamlūks oppressed the Arab tribes in Upper Egypt<sup>1</sup> because they were revolting against them. Their oppression forced these tribes to move southward into the Sudan.

The Arabs controlling the trade routes through the Red Sea ports started to threaten the Mamlūk trade. So the Mamlūks extended their control to these ports and put them under their authority.<sup>2</sup>

As a result the king of Nubia, Dawūd<sup>3</sup> raided upper Egypt and the port of 'Aydhab on the Red Sea in 1272. A deposed Nubian king asked Mamlūk support against Dawūd. Together with the Mamluk army he invaded Nubia defeated Dawūd and became king.<sup>4</sup> This interference gave the Mamlūks in Egypt the chance to interfere whenever trouble in succession arose.

In one of these troubles the Mamluks sent a Nubian prince, whom they had captured in a former battle and who had become a Moslem, to become the king of Nubia. When the existing king heard of this he suggested a member of the Kanz dynasty, a Moslem and his nephew, to succeed him. This was the first time that Nubia was ruled by a Moslem king.

1. Hasan Ahmad Mahmūd, Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa, p.322.

2. Lewis, Islam in Tropical Africa, p.152.

3. Lewis, Islam in Tropical Africa, p.152.

4. Hasan Ahmad Mahmūd, Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa, p.320.

From this time onward all the kings were Moslems. Under their rule large numbers of tribes immigrated to the Sudan. Of the tribes which settled in the Sudan at this time were Banu 'Amr, Banu Shibān and Juhainah.<sup>1</sup> The members of these tribes became the kings and the Christian dynasties did not rule again. This was also the end of the Christian kingdom of Mugarrah.

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This long chain of events took about six hundred years, starting from the sixth century C.E. with the coming of the Moslems and ending in the twelfth century C.E. with the abolishing of the Christian kingdom in the Northern Sudan. In spite of this long period the process of Islamising the country went on very slowly and it was not completed until the fifteenth century.

This slow pace was due to three main reasons. The first reason was that from the beginning the Moslem leaders did not intend to force Islam upon the country through 'Jihād', holy war, as they did in other parts of the continent. This was clear in their peaceful approach to the existing Christian kingdom.

The second reason was that the influx of Moslem immigrants came into the country for private benefit. They either came as traders, nomads seeking pastures or as refugees escaping from the political and social troubles in Arabia or Egypt. Thus the immigrants were not essentially advocates concerned with preaching Islam. Their influence was at first insignificant because they integrated with the inhabitants.

The third reason was that after the Moslems established themselves as governors, unlike the Christians, they didn't establish a centralised state. They retained their traditional tribal grudges and each tribe

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1. Hasan Ahmad Maḥmūd, Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa, p.322.

was endeavouring to take the lead. They engaged themselves in political conflicts instead of preaching their religion.

The end of the Christian kingdom of Muqarrah was an anticipation of the danger which threatened the second Christian kingdom in the Sudan, 'Alawah, South of Muqarrah. This kingdom extended from the third cataract in the North down the White and Blue Niles in the South with its capital Sōba near the present Khartoum.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the fourteenth century the Moslem tribes started to move southward along the Nile banks. Of those who migrated in large numbers were the Juhainah and the Ja'aliyyin tribes.<sup>2</sup> The King of 'Alawah did not realise the danger of this movement because the Moslems entered into marital relations with his subjects and they paid tribute. Another factor which allowed this immigration to continue unhindered was the fact that the centralized kingdom of 'Alawah was weak and broken by internal troubles. This helped the immigrants to establish strong tribal units within the kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

The end of the Christian kingdom of 'Alawah was brought about by an invasion of a people known as the Funj, whose origin was not certainly known. The Funj were thought to be an Arabian tribe who had fled from Arabia when the Abbasids came to power.<sup>4</sup> They came first to Abbyssinia then entered the Eastern Sudan and settled there. Some historians think that the Funj came from the kingdom of Bornu, West of Lake Chad. Others thought that they were the Shilluk tribes who lived in the South of the

1. J.S. Trimmingham, *The influence of Islam upon Africa*, p.22.

2. Hasan Ahmad Mahmūd, *Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa*, p.329.

3. Mahmūd Brelvi, *Islam in Africa*, p.155.

4. Hasan Ibrāhīm Hasan, *Intishār al-Islām fī al-Qārat al-Ifriqiyyah*, p.154.

Sudan. The Funj united with the infiltrating Arabs and destroyed the kingdom of 'Alawah. The end of 'Alawah was the end of Christianity in the Sudan.

The kingdom of 'Alawah was replaced by the Funj Sultanate. The Funj moved their capital from Sōba to Sennār 180 miles south of the present Khartoum. This Sultanate extended from the Red Sea to Kordofān, a province West of the Sudan. The Funj Sultan 'Umāra Dongus<sup>1</sup> appointed an Arab as his representative for Arab affairs in his Sultanate because they were Moslems and the Funj were not. It was said that 'Umāra later became a Moslem under the pressure of an Ottoman Sultan who invaded the Sudanese ports on the Red Sea coast.<sup>2</sup>

The contribution of the Funj Sultanate to the spreading of Islam in the Sudan was greater than that of the Moslems who governed in the North. This was partly because the Funj were well organised and united when they came to power. They were responsible for the domination of Islam in the central Sudan and the eastern region of the Sultanate. They encouraged the preaching of Islam by allowing learned men from other Islamic countries to come and settle in their Sultanate as preachers.<sup>3</sup>

One of their important achievements was the arrival of Islamic and Arabic influence in the western region of the Sudan for the first time,<sup>4</sup> and in particular what is now known as Kordofān province or the Nuba mountains. The first exodus of Moslems in Northern Sudan affected the Christians of the North linguistically, religiously and racially; and

1. 'Abd al-Qādir Mahmūd, *Al-Fikr al-Sūfī fī al-Sūdān*, p.39.

2. The same reference, p.39.

3. J.S.Trimingham, *The influence of Islam upon Africa*, p.24.

4. Lewis, *Islam in Tropical Africa*, p.209.

so was the movement of Moslems of the Funj from central Sudan westward in influencing the pagans of Kordofān. The only difference was that unlike the northern Sudan the immigrants were not the only element of Islamic penetration. Individual learned men came to this region mainly as preachers, and the major task of Islamisation was undertaken by them.

One of these preachers was able through his preaching to establish an Islamic kingdom in Kordofān. This was Muhammad al-Ja'alī of the Ja'aliyyin tribe.<sup>1</sup> This man arrived in the Tegali hills in 1530. He married a chief's daughter and founded a dynasty of kings there. The major factor through which his kingdom gained power was the preaching of Islam. The kings of Tegali encouraged immigrants, merchants and learned men to come to Tegali from the Funj Sultanate. Large numbers of pagans were also converted through intermarriage.

By the fall of the Funj Sultanate the whole of the Sudan was completely Islamised, with the exception of the South and part of the West which remained pagan.

The second route through which Islam penetrated into the Sudan was from the East across the Red Sea and Abyssinia. The penetration through the Red Sea was largely connected with trade activities. The ports of Badi', 'Aydhab and Suakin were flourishing trade centres. In Ibn Jubayr's<sup>2</sup> travels there is reference to these ports and the activities that were taking place. He mentioned the relationship between the pagans of this part of the Sudan (the Beja) and the Moslem merchants. Probably when the Moslem immigration started in Northern Sudan some of these traders might have penetrated into the country towards the Nile. During the

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1. Lewis, *Islam in Tropical Africa*, p.209.

2. R.J.C.Broadhurst, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, pp. 48, 63,4,6.

Islamic Funj Sultanate this immigration increased. Pilgrims from the Sudan used these ports to cross the Red Sea to Mecca. Tribal migration through this route also took place in the eleventh century. A branch of Banu Khuzaimah<sup>1</sup> settled in the Beja country. They intermarried with the inhabitants and introduced Islam to them. The Beja were essentially nomads and their region was similar in climate to that of the Arabs, so the Arabs didn't find any difficulty in settling there. During the political troubles which took place in Arabia in the last days of the Ummayyads, some of the refugees fled across the Red Sea into the Sudan.<sup>2</sup>

The penetration of Islam from Abyssinia also took the form of immigration. The tide of immigrants was not so strong as that through the North from Egypt. It was hindered mainly by the geographic nature of Abyssinia. Unlike Egypt and the Sudan, Abyssinia was not suitable for the nomadic Arabs. It is a mountainous region with no open land or desert, except for the narrow strip of the coastal line along the Red Sea.

The Arabs had known Abyssinia before the coming of Islam. The invasion of Yemen by the Abyssinians is a proof of this relationship. When Christianity was established in Abyssinia, the Abyssinians invaded Yemen and built a church in San'ā. They tried to invade Mecca in 571, the year in which the Prophet 'peace be upon him' was born, in order to destroy the Ka'aba and divert the Arabs towards the church in Yemen.<sup>3</sup>

The Arabs who came to Abyssinia before Islam settled mainly in the coastal plains. They didn't penetrate into the hinterland because it was mountainous and in order to avoid any conflict with the original

1. Hasan Ahmad Mahmūd, Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa, p.328.

2. The same reference, p.62.

3. Hasan Ibrāhīm Hasan, Intishār al-Islām fī al-qārat al-Ifriqiyyah, p.162.

inhabitants who were concentrated mainly in the highlands. Both the inhabitants and the migrating Arabs were pagans.

In 330 CE Christianity came to Abyssinia from Egypt.<sup>1</sup> The lack of any co-operation and links between the Arabs and the Abyssinians meant that most of the Arabs remained pagans. These Arabs were involved only in trade activities and had little influence upon the Abyssinians of the coast.

The first Islamic appearance in Abyssinia was that of the small number of Sahābah sent by the Prophet, peace be upon him, to take refuge there.<sup>2</sup> From that time onwards the Moslems continued to come to Abyssinia as merchants or immigrants. Their number increased and they settled in the cities founded by the earlier Arabs. These cities continued to be dominated by Moslems. Soon they developed these towns into Islamic principalities depending mostly on their tribal system. These principalities became so strong that they cut the Abyssinians off from any outlet to the sea.<sup>3</sup> At the same time the movement of the Moslems inside the country was limited and only smaller regions were influenced by Islam. Thus Islamic influence was kept inside the country without penetrating westward into the Sudan up to the fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

In the fifteenth century the Europeans realised the strategic importance of Abyssinia as a point on their route to India. The Portuguese were the first to think of capturing this area from the Moslems to secure their trade in the Indian Ocean.<sup>5</sup> So they invaded Abyssinia and

1. Mahmūd Brelvi, Islam in Africa, p.199.

2. Muhammad al-Ghazālī, Fiqh al-Sīrah, p.155.

3. T. Arnold, The Preaching of Islam, p.113.

4. The same reference, p.115.

5. Mahmūd Brelvi, Islam in Africa, p.193.

destroyed all the Islamic cities along the coast.

This was probably the time when the Moslems who survived the Portuguese disasters started to immigrate. They moved northwards towards the Red Sea in the Beja land and established themselves there. They intermarried with the Beja and influenced them. When 'Abd Allāh Ibn Sa'ad Ibn Abū al-Sarh invaded the Sudan he left the country without any encounter with the Beja of the East.<sup>1</sup> Those who lived in the areas bordering Egypt were subdued and became Moslems in name only. The Beja in the East remained pagans and they used to annoy the Moslems in Egypt with their repeated attacks on their borders. It is probable that most of the Islamic influence on the Beja was caused by the Moslems who immigrated from Abyssinia or Arabia across the Red Sea. This is because the relation between the Beja and the Moslems in Egypt was hostile and there were many battles between them. 'Ubaydallāh Ibn al-Habhab was one of the Moslem leaders who concluded a peace treaty with the Beja.<sup>2</sup>

This treaty allowed the Beja to enter Egypt as traders on condition that they stopped harrassing the Egyptian borders and killing Moslem subjects. The Beja violated this treaty many times. A serious violation which led the Moslems to fight them was the killing of some pilgrims on their way to Mecca across the Red Sea. 'Abdallāh Ibn al-Jahm fought the Beja and signed a peace treaty with their chief Kannōn Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz.<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy that although the Bejas' chief was a pagan, he had a Moslem name.

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1. Lewis, Islam in Tropical Africa, p.148.

2. Hasan Ibrahim Hasan, *Intishār al-Islām fī al-qārat al-Ifriqiya*, p.142.

3. Lewis, Islam in Tropical Africa, p.149.



This shows the Islamic influence which the earlier Moslem immigrants from the East had on the Beja. The reference in the latter treaty to the security of the mosques in the Beja country also shows that there were many mosques which were probably built by the Moslems who came either from Abyssinia or across the Red Sea. The treaty also mentioned that the Beja should pay Khārāj (tax) and not the Jizyah which is paid by non-Moslems. This also shows that the number of Moslems under the rule of this chief was large.

The Moslems spread Islam among the Beja mainly through intermarriage. The Islamisation of the Beja was started by the Eastern route and it was only later in the fourteenth<sup>1</sup> century that the immigrants from the North started arriving in this region.

In the fourteenth century during the Mamluk regime the Arabs of Upper Egypt were severely treated by the Mamluks and were subjected to heavy taxes. These Arabs found their solution in moving Southward into the Beja country bordering Egypt. They found that their fellow Moslems had already established themselves in the country.

Through intermarriage these Moslems claimed the right of leadership. Gradually the country was Islamised and the Beja's language was supplanted by the Arabic language. The major role of the Beja in the Islamisation of the Sudan after they became Moslems was that they united with the Funj Sultanate and destroyed the Christian kingdom of 'Alawa.<sup>2</sup> When the Funj capital was transferred to Sennār the Beja became part of this Sultanate.

This unity between the Islamic influx from the North and the East brought the Sudan under Islamic domination. The Funj Sultanate which

1. Hasan Ahmad Mahmūd, Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa, p.322.

2. 'Abd al-Qadir Mahmūd, al-Fikr al-Ṣūfī fī al-Sūdān, p.36.

was the climax of this domination spread its influence even beyond the borders of the Sudan. Its victory in the wars in Abyssinia<sup>1</sup> was praised by the Moslems of Egypt and Arabia and it opened the country to further strong relations with the Islamic world. They sent students to Egypt for Islamic studies, and encouraged learned men from Arabia, Egypt and Morocco to come to the Sudan. It was in their time that the first Sufis came into the Sudan as will be shown later.

The third route through which Islam came into the Sudan was from North West and West Africa through the West of the country. The Islamic influence from North West Africa came also through West Africa.

The major factor in the spreading of the North Western Islamic influence into West Africa was the Islamisation of the Berber tribes who dwelled on the borders between North and West Africa. In spite of the Islamic activities among the Berbers most of these tribes resisted Islam and remained pagans.<sup>2</sup> Those who became Moslems did not finally surrender to the Arabs and they were ready at any time to break away.

During the Ummayyads Caliphate the North African countries became an integral part of the Islamic world; they participated in and were influenced by the events that took place.<sup>3</sup> The events that occurred during the last days of the Ummayyads had also affected North Africa. The different sects and creeds established themselves among the Moroccans. The country was once more divided and prepared for the Berbers to rebel against the Arabs.

1. Hasan Ahmad Mahmūd, Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa, p.352.

2. Trimmingham, A History of Islam in West Africa, p.17.

3. Mahmūd Brelvi, Islam in Africa, p.9.

Islam was not strongly established among the Berbers until it assumed the form of national movements. The leading national movement was that of the Almoravids which had attracted most of the Berber tribes to embrace Islam. This movement was very important in the history of Islam in Africa because its effect and influence was not a local one. It helped the domination of Islam from the Atlantic in the West to the Sudān in the East. What is significant about this movement is that it appeared among the Berbers themselves.

A chief of a Berber tribe - Sanhāja - called Yahyā Ibn Ibrāhīm,<sup>1</sup> on his return from Mecca went into Morocco. There he looked for a learned man to accompany him to the Berber lands to teach them Islam. He met 'Abd Allāh Ibn Yāsīn<sup>2</sup> who agreed to go with him. Ibn Yāsīn had found that, in spite of the many preachers who came to the Berbers, the number of Moslems among them was very small. He realised that his task was not only to teach Islam, but also to convert pagans. The Berbers did not accept Ibn Yāsīn's teachings and ignored him. So he decided to leave with the small number he converted and preach Islam in West Africa instead.

29 He went with his disciples to an African island in the Senegal River where they founded a 'ribāt' - place for worship - and devoted themselves to religious exercises.<sup>3</sup> Hence they took the name 'al-murābitūn' Almoravids. The number of his disciples continued to increase from among the Berber tribes. When he gathered a large number he declared that the time was suitable for them to go and preach Islam among the pagan Berbers. When the Berbers once again rejected their preaching, he decided

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1. T. Arnold, The Preaching of Islam, p.314.

2. The same reference, p.315.

3. Trimingham, A History of Islam in West Africa, p.23.

to fight them. He launched the holy war, Jihād, against them. The victory he achieved persuaded the pagans to accept Islam more than the peaceful preaching. After his death the movement continued successfully and influenced many religious leaders in West Africa.

The final task of Islamising the Berbers was achieved by the Almohads 'al-Muwahhidūn' and the Idrisids - who followed the same methods as the Almoravids.<sup>1</sup>

The Berbers after adopting Islam spread it in West Africa. The infiltration of the Berbers among the West Africans was caused, in addition to trade, by political reasons. The Fatimid Caliphs oppressed many Arab tribes in Egypt and forced them to move westward.<sup>2</sup> These tribes invaded North Africa and dispersed in larger areas reaching as far as the Berber lands. Under their pressure the Berbers withdrew southward into West Africa. They established themselves among the Negroes and controlled many flourishing trade centres. Through trade and intermarriage Islam infiltrated among the Negroes and continued to spread slowly. Some of the Berber tribes adopted Almoravid methods in spreading Islam by force. Many West African kingdoms adopted Islam and joined in these holy wars.<sup>3</sup>

The last strong kingdom in West Africa to be brought under Islamic control was the kingdom of Ghana,<sup>4</sup> which had once dominated all the other kingdoms. Its conquest put all the region between the Senegal and the Niger Rivers under Islamic influence. The Moslem Negroes of this region contributed largely to the penetration of Islam into the regions of the

1. T. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p.316.

2. T. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p.316.

3. Hasan Ahmad Mahmūd, *Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa*, p.283.

4. Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, p.58.

Fullani and Hausa, between the Niger and Lake Chad. These two states were very active. After adopting Islam they continued to spread it in many regions. Their influence reached as far as the kingdom of Waday on the Western borders of the Sudan.

Islam penetrated into the Sudan from West Africa by means of traders and pilgrims who passed through the country on their way to the Red Sea ports. However, the immigrants were the major factor in this penetration.

In the region East of Lake Chad existed a strong pagan kingdom known as Wadāy.<sup>1</sup> The inhabitants of this state were the strong tribes of the Zaghāwah, the descendants of whom still live in Dārūr province in the Sudan. These tribes hindered any Islamic penetration in the western region of the Sudan.

In the thirteenth century a Berber tribe from the Tuareg<sup>2</sup> invaded the Zaghāwah region and settled there. They mixed with the original inhabitants. This tribe was known as the Tunjūr tribe. They founded a strong kingdom on the borders of Dārūr with the Chad region. They were pagans and they became an obstacle to any Islamic advance from West Africa into the Sudan. Even the pilgrims, from West Africa, who wanted to pass through this kingdom on their way to Mecca had to take the permission of the authority in this area. Although the Tunjur were Arabic-speaking people, yet few of them embraced Islam through contact with the neighbouring Islamic states.

The Tunjur remained pagans until the sixteenth century when 'Abd al-Karīm Sābūn<sup>3</sup> established the Islamic kingdom of Waday on the borders of

1. Trimingham, A History of Islam in West Africa, p.138.

2. The same reference, p.139.

3. The same reference, p.215.

the Tunjūr kingdom. He fought the Tunjūr and captured part of their kingdom. He established strong commercial relations with Egypt through Libya, and welcomed foreign merchants. His son Yūsuf Kharifain who succeeded him was also an energetic Islamic leader. He was killed and a grandson of his succeeded him. During his reign cholera and famine brought disaster to the kingdom of Waday. This was the time when his people invaded the Tunjūr region, devastated it and reached as far as Dārfūr in Western Sudan.

These Moslems from Waday settled in Dārfūr. They mixed with the pagans and introduced Islam to them. But Islam was not established strongly during this period. From the pagans of Dārfūr who became Moslems appeared an Islamic leader known as Sulaimān Solon (1440-1476).<sup>1</sup> He established the first Islamic Sultanate of Dārfūr. He also established strong relations with the Funj Sultanate in the centre of the Sudan. Paganism disappeared gradually from Dārfūr.

Sulaimān's successors followed his steps in establishing Islam in the region. Their hospitality to Moslem advocates encouraged many of the 'Ulamā to migrate to Dārfūr. The Sultans maintained the tradition of sending an annual gift of ivory and ostrich feather to Mecca. Later they recognized the Ottoman Sultans as Caliphs for all Moslems. This Sultanate survived until 1916 when it was conquered and annexed to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.<sup>3</sup>

The domination of Islam in Dārfūr was the final phase in the expansion of Islam in the Sudān. By the second half of the sixteenth

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1. Hasan Ahmad Mahmūd, Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa, p.358.

2. The same reference, p.361.

3. J.S.Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.97.

century<sup>1</sup> the area extending from the Egyptian borders in the North to Sennār in the South, and from the Red Sea in the East to Dārḡūr in the West became an Islamic region.

The culture which influenced the West African Islamic Culture was mainly from North West Africa, i.e. Morocco. The same elements also influenced the Islamic life in the Sudan.

The first element was the domination of the Mālīkī school of law. Although this influence partly came from Upper Egypt into the Sudan, yet Morocco also influenced the Sudan to a large extent through West Africa. This also could be drawn from the fact that the dominant school of law in Egypt is the Shāfi'i.

The second element was the idea of Mahdism. This idea came from North into West Africa.<sup>2</sup> This idea was reflected in the holy wars 'Jihād' of the Fullani people under the leadership of their Shaikh 'Uthmān dān Fodio in 1804, his brother 'Abdullāhī and his son Muḡammad Bello.<sup>3</sup> Although none of these claimed to be the Mahdi, yet they prophesied the appearance of the expected Mahdi.

Some of their prophecies were the most important factor in the immigration of Moslem scholars and Sufis to the Sudan. This was the major effect of West African Islam on the Sudan.

These prophecies were that the Mahdi will appear in the East, and his appearance will be preceded by a period of drought, internal conflict and political unrest in the Maghrib and West Africa. The result of these prophecies was the mass movement towards the Sudan and Mecca.

1. Mahmūd Brelvi, Islam in Africa, p.156.

2. The same reference p.135.

3. Lewis, Islam in Tropical Africa, p.427.

The most important element of influence which came into the Sudan from North West and West Africa is Sufism.

Sufism came into the Sudan side by side with Islam. Holy men and teachers accompanied the traders wherever they went. They were directly responsible for consolidating the process of religious conversion. The holy men were not only teachers. Encouraged by the mystical powers which they either claimed or were attributed to them by their followers, these men acted as mediators both in religious and secular affairs. They were very effective in recently converted communities. The importance of these men in Sudanese society is reflected in the large number of tombs, especially the dome-shaped buildings known as 'qoba', all over the country.

It was made clear earlier that the beginning of Sufism in the Sudan, and the first Sufis to appear there came with the rise of the Islamic Sultanate of the Funj. The kings of the Funj encouraged learned men both from abroad and from inside the country to come and settle in their kingdom to teach Islam.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Dayf Allah, a Sudanese historian (1727-1810), in his *Tabaqāt* has recorded interesting accounts about this period in the history of Sufism in the Sudan. It may be said that his book is one of the essential sources for the study of the coming of Sufism to the Sudan. Although he had not written about this point in a straightforward way, yet one can bring together the scattered facts he has included in his writings.

His book is essentially a record of famous personalities during the Funj Sultanate. The author himself stressed the fact that he depended

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1. Hasan Ahmad Mahmūd, *Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa*, p.373.

*to be consistent with the bibliography, this title should be in Arabic.*



in his writing on the oral traditions he had collected from the people. This shows that there was no written history about the period he intended to cover. He said: "There is no written history about our ancestors, nor about these men; but they are known to everyone. What people say about them is reliable since it is narrated by a series of successive narrators."<sup>1</sup>

The title of the book is "Kitāb at-Tabaqāt fī Khūsūs al-Awliyā' wa'l-Sālihīn wa'l-Ulamā' wa'l-Shu'arā fī al-Sudān." The author also claimed that he intended to write in addition about the kings and Shaikhs who were interested in religion.<sup>2</sup> In spite of this the book seemed to be concerned only with al-Awliyā, 'saints' especially those who were related in one way or another to Sufism. There is hardly a separate account for a poet or a king. They are only referred to or included in accounts which are mostly dedicated to Awliyā. This fact emphasises that the Walis formed the focal point of the author's interest, a fact which also emphasises their importance in the Sudan.

The number of the Walis mentioned in at-Tabaqāt is about two hundred and seventy most of whom were referred to directly as Sufis. It is important to distinguish between the real meaning of the word 'Walī' as 'The protégé of God', and its meaning in at-Tabaqāt where 'Walī' is used in the sense which most of the Sudanese use. Walī is used to refer to any religious man whether he is a Sufi or not.

This large number of Walīs lived during the Funj Sultanate.<sup>3</sup> This large number indicates the extent to which Sufism has been established in

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1. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqāt, p.34.

2. The same reference, p.44.

3. The same reference, p.34.

the Sudan. It also proves the fact that Islam was established in the Sudan on a Sufi basis. This does not mean that the Sudan had known and practised Sufism in its classical mystical sense. The first roots of Sufism in the Sudan took the form of ordinary non-esoteric religious associations. This is clear from the fact that there were no mystical formulations available during this early period.

Most of the works that the men mentioned in at-Tabaqāt had written were either an explanation or an addition to former works brought from abroad. There are about fifty books mentioned in at-Tabaqāt which had been circulating among these men, and most of them were said to have been read several times. Some of these books were related to Sufism. Of these were 'Latā'if al-Minan'<sup>1</sup> by al-Sha'arānī; 'al-Durar al-Kāminah'<sup>2</sup> by al-'Asqalānī; 'Dalā'il al-Khayrāt'<sup>3</sup> by al-Jazūlī; 'Hizb al-Bahr'<sup>4</sup> by al-Jilānī and 'Munājāt Ibn'Atā Allāh'.<sup>5</sup>

A few books were originally written by Sudanese Sufis at that time. Ibn Dayf Allah mentioned only four books. These are 'Tarshīd 'Ilm al-Murīdīn fī al-Tasawwūf' by 'Abd al Rahmān Ibn Jābir'<sup>6</sup>; 'Sifāt al-faqīr' by Muhammad Ibn Hadawī<sup>7</sup>; and 'Ādāb at-Tarīq' and 'Ādāb al Dhikr' by Shaikh Ismā'il Sāhib al-Rabāba'.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqāt, p.179.

2. The same reference, p.35.

3. The same reference, p.66.

4. The same reference, p.197.

5. The same reference, p.246.

6. The same reference, p. 251.

7. The same reference, p.264.

8. The same reference, p.92.

The first influx of Sufis into the Sudan started at the beginning of the sixteenth century during the Funj Sultanate.<sup>1</sup> Although by that time Islam was established in the Sudan, it was merely a process of conversion. Teaching of the Qur'ān and Sharī'a did not exist. This is clear in what Ibn Dayf Allah said about this period that "At this time - the first half of the sixteenth century - there were no schools for teaching Islam; the people were totally ignorant even of the simplest rules of marriage and divorce."<sup>2</sup>

It should be noticed that Ibn Dayf Allah was referring to a certain area in the Sudan, that is the central part of the country where the Funj state was established. But before that time organised teaching of Islam started in the Sudan specifically in the North.

This was started by a man called Ghulām Allāh Ibn 'Aid<sup>3</sup> who arrived in the Sudan in the first half of the fourteenth century. He came from a village known as Hulailah in the Island of Nuwawah in Yemen. This man settled in Dongolah. He built a mosque there and started teaching the Qur'ān and Sharī'a to his sons and other students. Some of his grandsons were among those who came from the North to teach Islam in the Funj Sultanate, as will be shown.

Another man was Shaikh Hammad Abū Dunnānah.<sup>4</sup> He married the daughter of Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad Sulaimān al-Jazūlī, author of 'Dalā'il al-Khayrāt' and a Shādhilī leader in Morocco.<sup>5</sup> Abu Dunnānah migrated to

1. 'Abd al Qādir Maḥmūd, al-Tawā'if al-Sūfiya fī al-Sūdān, p.5.

2. Ibn Dayf Allāh, at-Tabaqāt, p.40.

3. Hasan Ahmad Maḥmūd, Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa, p.326.

4. 'Abd al-Qādir Maḥmūd, al-Fikr al-Sūfī fī al-Sūdān, p.53.

5. Trimmingham, The Sufi Orders in Islam, p.84.

is Arabic  
(remark p.46)

the Sudan in 1445 with his family and settled in al-Mahmiyya. Being a son-in-law of a Shādhilī leader Abū Dunnānah was probably a Shādhilī and he might have taught the Shādhilī Tariqah in the Sudan where he settled.

It should be noticed that these men who came to the Sudan before the rise of the Funj Sultanate, settled in the North of the country. This may be because at that time the North was completely Islamised and the central part of the country was still under the control of the Christian kingdom of 'Alawah. It was only after the Funj came to power that the migration of religious men southward started.

As was stated earlier the Moslems who settled in the North never tried to establish a centralised Islamic state. This is why there was no cultural activity concerned with teaching Islam. If there was such an activity Ibn Dayf Allah would not have ignored it. The religious men he mentioned who lived in the North were only those who came after the Funj Sultanate.

The Funj regime had witnessed the flourishing of the first Islamic activities in the Sudan. This is clear from the migration of religious men, from inside and abroad, to the Funj state. It is also evident from the large number of Sudanese who were taught by these men as is clear in at-Tabaqāt. One specific characteristic of this movement was that it was largely dominated by Sufism in its simplest form.

The factors which led to the migration of learned men to the Sudan were both external and internal ones. The external factors were largely connected with the political unrest which dominated the Islamic world at that time. This political unrest started with the rise of the Abbasid Caliphate in Arabia and prevailed during the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt. During the period of this migration the situation in Morocco was also

unstable.<sup>1</sup>

This led to the migration of many people who were weary of political conflict and who started to adopt a Sufi way of life.<sup>2</sup> The internal factors which encouraged this migration were the peaceful and stable situation in the Funj Sultanate. The Funj leaders also encouraged this migration. They treated the Shaikhs with great respect, to the extent that the Shaikhs became influential in both the religious and social life as will be shown.

Although there was no organized Islamic teaching in the Sudan before the Funj Sultanate, yet it is most important to notice that most, if not all, of the religious leaders during the Funj Sultanate emerged from within the country. Some of these men were either descendants or students of the first teachers in the Northern Sudan, or men who sought knowledge on their own and migrated to Islamic countries like Egypt and Arabia and then returned and taught in the Sudan. Examples of both categories may be found in *at-Tabaqāt*.<sup>3</sup>

The first Shaikh to arrive in the Funj Sultanate was Mahmūd al-'Arakī.<sup>4</sup> He was a Sudanese born in the White Nile area. He travelled to Egypt where he was taught by the brothers Nāṣir and Shams al-Dīn of Luggānah Village. He was also taught by Muḥammad al-Bakrī, a Sufi Shaikh in Egypt.<sup>5</sup> Ibn Dayf Allah mentioned that al-'Arakī was the first to teach the Sudanese the laws of marriage and divorce. This indicates that he

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1. <sup>Ahmad Mahmūd in Arabic</sup> Hasan Ibrahim Hasan, *Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa*, p.129.
  2. 'Abd Al Qādir Mahmūd, *al-Fikr al-Sūfī fī al-Sūdān*, p.50.
  3. Ibn Dayf Allah, *At-Tabaqāt*, pp. 234, 256, 344,45.
  4. " " " " p. 40.
  5. " " " " p.113.

was taught the Qur'ān and Shari'a law by his two masters. The brothers of Luggānah specialised, in addition to Qur'ān, in al-Risālah by al-Gairawānī, a Maliki leader in al-Gairawān, and Mukhtasar Khalīl in the Mālīkī Madhhab, by Khalīl Ibn Ishāg, a Maliki leader in Egypt. These were two of the important books in use during the Funj Sultanate. Most of the Shaikhs in at-Tabaqāt were said to have learned these two books by heart. This may be why the Maliki Madhhab was and is dominant in the Sudan.

Although it is not stated in at-Tabaqāt whether the brothers of Luggānah had taught al-'Arakī a Sufi Tariqah or not, yet this can be deduced from what his son Muhammad said. Muhammad Ibn Mahmūd al-'Arakī was described in at-Tabaqāt as 'The Walī' protégé of God, a Sufi term. He is also said to be a "Murshid and Musallik fī al-Tariq"<sup>1</sup>, i.e. a director and a guide to a Tariqah. All these are Sufi terms as well. A follower asked Muhammad Ibn al-'Arakī from where he got his 'Sirr' mystery and 'Barakaḥ' holiness. Muhammad answered: "I have got the 'Sirr' and 'Barakaḥ' of my father, and I have a 'Sirr' from Muhammad al-Bakrī; and my father got his 'Sirr' from the brothers of Luggānah." This indicates that Mahmūd al-'Arakī was initiated into a Sufi tariqah in Egypt. In the Sudan he initiated only his son Muhammad who in turn initiated his grandson Burr Ibn 'Abd al-Ma'abūd Ibn 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Nuwairī.<sup>2</sup>

The Tariqah these three had followed is not mentioned in at-Tabaqāt; but it may be traced through the line of Muhammad al-Bakrī the Egyptian Sufi Shaikh who taught Mahmūd al-'Arakī. Muhammad al-Bakrī was a descendant of Bait as-Siddīqī or Bait Bakrī which was founded by Mustafā al-Bakrī who was a Khalwātī.<sup>3</sup> The head of this house used to function as Shaikh Mashā'ikh as-Sufiyyah until the year 1926.

1. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqāt, p.345.

2. " " " " , p.112.

3. Trimingham, The Sufi Orders in Islam, p.77.

Thus al-Bakrī's tariqah which al-'Arakī followed was the Khalwātiyyah of Egypt. If this is so, the Khalwātiyyah was earlier in the Sudan than the Qādiriyyah, though it didn't gain a stronghold in the Sudan. The reason why this tariqah didn't become popular may be because it was only Al-'Arakī, his son Muhammad and his grandson Burr who adopted it. No one mentioned in at-Tabaqāt was said to have been initiated by them although Al-'Arakī's son was described as a director and a guide to the Path.

The second Shaikh to arrive in the Funj State was Ibrāhīm al-Bulād.<sup>1</sup> He was a descendant of Ghulam Allāh Ibn 'Aid, born in Northern Sudan and he went to Egypt for his studies under the guidance of Muhammad al-Banūfari, an Egyptian ascetic.<sup>2</sup> He taught for some time in the Northern Sudan and then moved to the Funj Sultanate, in the second half of the sixteenth century. There he taught about forty Shaikhs. According to Ibn Dayf Allah all these forty became 'awliya' protégés and 'Aqtāb' axis or heads of the heirarchy of Awliya. This is an indication that Ibrāhīm was initiated into a tariqah by his master in Egypt, although this tariqah is not identified. Of the forty Shaikhs Ibrāhīm initiated, only one is mentioned and that was his brother, 'Abd al-Rahmān.

Another Shaikh who came to the Funj Sultanate was Shaikh Siqairūn<sup>3</sup> who was a descendant of the formerly mentioned Ghulam Allāh Ibn 'Aid. He was taught by his uncle Isma'il Ibn Jābir, brother of Ibrāhīm Ibn al-Bulād. He then migrated to Egypt and was initiated by al-Banūfari. He arrived in the Funj Sultanate and was given a plot of land by the

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1. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqāt, p.40.

2. " " " " , p.45.

3. " " " " , p.42.

government where he established the village of al-Figaigah. He built a mosque there, the foundation of which was said to have been laid by al-Khadr - peace be upon him.<sup>1</sup>

These Shaikhs who were initiated outside the Sudan formed the foundation for the first Islamic activity in the Sudan. They taught many Shaikhs who in turn taught many others. This activity was not only undertaken by the Sudanese Shaikhs who pursued their studies abroad, but also by many Shaikhs who were not Sudanese and who arrived in the Sudan during the splendour of the Funj Sultanate.

The first of these Shaikhs was Taj al-Din al-Bahari who arrived in the Sudan around A.D.1550<sup>2</sup>. He was from Baghdad and a follower of the Qadiriyya Tariqah. He arrived in the Sudan after being invited by a Sudanese merchant known as Daud Ibn 'Abd al-Jalil, although Ibn Dayf Allah said he came by an order from the Prophet 'peace be upon him' and 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani. Al-Bahari settled in al-Gezira in the Central Sudan, in a place called Wadi Sha'ir, where he started teaching his tariqah. The way in which he started initiating his followers was a peculiar one. It is said in at-Tabaqat<sup>3</sup> that he put a number of sheep in a store-room and told those who wanted to follow him that he would direct and guide them, but would instantly slaughter them so that they die rightful and true believers. The people were terrified by the idea and refused his offer of initiation, except one known as Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Sadiq famous as al-Hamim, and another one known as Ban an-Naqqa al-Darir.

1. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqat, p.236.

2. Trimingham, The Sufi orders in Islam, p.44.

3. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqat, p.108.



Al-Bahārī put the two men in the store-room where he kept the sheep. He initiated them into the Qādiriyya ṭarīqah. He slaughtered the sheep and let the blood pass outside the door so that the people could see it. The people thought that he had really slaughtered the men and when he asked them again to be taught they refused. Then he asked the two men to come out of the store-room, and asked each of them to eat from the meat of the sheep slaughtered for him. It was thought that he had put a "Sirr" mystery into the meat for the two men.

Al-Bahārī stayed in the Sudan for seven years and married there. On leaving the Sudan, he chose Muhammad al-Hamīm as his Khalīfa. Muhammad al-Hamīm initiated three Shaikhs into the Qādiriyya, 'Ali al-Nayal<sup>1</sup> and Nūr al-Dīn<sup>2</sup> his son, and Salmān al-Zaghrāt.<sup>3</sup> Muhammad al-Hamīm was described by Ibn Dayf Allah as a Malāmātī Sufi.<sup>4</sup> The Malāmātī is a Sufi who tends to conceal his divine gifts and spiritual status by sharing in all worldly things even in a more exaggerated way. Muhammad al-Hamīm married about ninety wives among whom some were sisters. A Judge condemned his behaviour and decided that all his wives should be divorced, because his behaviour did not agree with the laws of the Qur'ān and the Shari'a. Muhammad al-Hamīm ignored this decision and even answered the judge in the following verses though he was said to be illiterate:<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqāt, p.300.

2. " " " " , p.364.

3. " " " " , p.218.

4. " " " " , p.318

5. " " " " , p.320.

فإن كنت يا قاضي قرأت مذاهباً  
 فلم تدر يا قاضي رموز مذاهبنا  
 فمذهبكم نصلح به بعض ديننا  
 ومذهبنا يعجم عليكم إذا قلنا  
 قطعنا البحار الزخرات وراءنا  
 فلم يدر الفقهاء أين توجهننا  
 حللنا بوارٍ عندنا اسمه الفنا  
 فضايق بنا الواري ونحن ما ضيقنا ... الخ..

Although al-Baharī's Khalīfah continued to be chosen from among the descendants of Muḥammad al-Hamīm, yet his tariqah (the Qādiriyya) was developed and maintained through the line of his other initiate Ban al-Naqqā al-Darīr.

Another Shaikh to arrive from abroad was Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Qaram.<sup>1</sup> He was an Egyptian who arrived first in Berber in the Northern Sudan at the beginning of the Funj Sultanate. He was a Shāfi'i and taught this Madhhab to many of the Shāfi'is of the Funj. He was also the first to teach the Sudanese what they called 'ilm al-Farā'id' (laws of inheritance).

Another Shaikh was al-Tilimsānī al-Maghribī<sup>2</sup> who initiated Shaikh Muḥammad Ibn 'Isā Suwār al-Dahab into what Ibn Dayf Allah called Tariq al-Qawm. He gave no details about who al-Tilimsānī was and what was his Tariqah. Most important is that he mentioned that this Shaikh had taught Ibn 'Isā 'ilm al-Tawhīd, doctrine, and 'ilm al-Kalām, theology, which were afterwards spread in the Funj Sultanate.

1. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqāt, p.353.

2. " " " " , p. 41.

Some of the Shaikhs at that time were said to have become Awliyā without being initiated by any master. They were said to be initiated directly by the Prophet, peace be upon him, like Shaikh Hasan Wad Hissūna<sup>1</sup> or by Divine emanation, like Shaikh Idrīs Ibn al-Arbāb.<sup>2</sup>

All of these Shaikhs, Sudanese or foreigners, formed the base for the spreading of Islam and Sufism in the Sudan.

These early Sufis were mainly concerned with teaching the essentials of Islam to their followers. They depended in this mostly on the Qur'an, the Traditions, Mukhtasar Khalīl and Risālat al-Gairawānī. Each Shaikh had a certain approach to his way of teaching his followers. In addition there were certain 'Adhkār' (invocations) and 'Awrad' (Litanies) prescribed by the Shaikh to his followers.

Ibn Dayf Allah dedicated most of his writing to the Karamāt 'miracles' of the Shaikhs. He didn't write any details about the Shaikhs' beliefs and approaches except in a limited number of cases. From these one can summarise the general features of the Sufi behaviour of these early Sufis who lived between the years 1530 - 1753, the time by which the author claimed to have finished writing his book.

The early Sufis in the Sudan like other Sufis depended on the Qur'an as the first source of their belief. The Shaikh learned the Qur'an by heart at the age of seven or ten with another Shaikh. This was called hifz al-Kitāb.<sup>3</sup>

The second source was part of the first and that was a number of Qiraat of Qur'an. These were al-Gizriyya by Shams al-Dīn Ibn Yāsīn al-

1. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqāt, p. 41.

2. " " " " "

3. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqāt, pp.265-292.

Dimashqī al-Jizrī,<sup>1</sup> al-Kharāzī, and al-Shātibīyyah, by Abu al-Qāsim Ibn Gayrah al-Shātibī from Indolesia.<sup>2</sup> These were learnt by heart both by the Shaikh and his followers. They were intended to ensure the accurate reading of the Qur'ān (tajwīd).

The third source was the study of fiqh (jurisprudence) and the Traditions. The books in this field were Mukhtasar Khalīl, Risālat al-Gairawānī, Mukhtasar al-Akhdarī by 'Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Muhammad al-Akhdarī, and Matn al-'Ashmāwiyya by 'Abd al-Bārī' al-'Ashmāwī al-Rifā'ī. All these books were concerned with the Mālikī Madhhab. In addition there was al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr and al-Jāmi' al-Saghīr fī al-Hadīth by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī.

These were the three sources on which the approach to Sufism was based at this early stage. One of the best examples in at-Tabaqāt which demonstrates how the Shaikhs depended mostly on these three sources was Shaikh Hamad Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Alī al-Mashā'ikhī who was famous as Wad Umm Mariōm (1646 - 1730).

This Shaikh's teachings consisted of three stages. The first was that he ordered his followers to follow what the Qur'ān and the Sharī'a asked them to follow and to abstain from what is forbidden. He was very keen on implementing this and he set a good example for the people. This was clear in his story of his Shaikh reported in at-Tabaqāt. He asked his Shaikh not to perform prayers for dead persons who didn't perform prayers when alive according to Sharī'a law. His Shaikh accepted his advice and consequently the people became angry with him. For their sake he continued to pray for their dead. So Hamad was annoyed with his

1. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqāt, p.102.

2. " " " " , p.282.

Shaikh's negligence of the laws and left him.<sup>1</sup>

He imposed upon those who repented certain rules. These rules included the rules which are found in the Shari'a. These were the abandoning of the sins which one had committed, the feeling of deep penitence for committing them and a firm resolution never to commit them again. To these rules Shaikh Hamad added that the repentent should be sincere in what he had decided to do. The repentent should abstain from all vices like hypocrisy, pride and telling lies. He shouldn't take things which were not his, nor listen to bad things. He should forsake vicious communities in every aspect of life. He told those who came to read the Qur'an under his guidance that the first essential step was not learning the Qur'an. They should first know the essential features of Islam. They should know that Allah is the only creator, and they should say their prayers. He also ordered his followers that if anyone of them ever ate something which didn't legally belong to him, he should fast in order to lose the weight he had put on by doing so. Those who didn't say their prayers should say all the prayers they had missed.

All this shows a tendency by the Shaikh to purify his followers' souls from all the vices before proceeding with their education. This part of the Shaikh's way is called by him the orders (al-Awāmīr).

The second stage is what the Shaikh called the deeds.<sup>2</sup> These were the things the Shaikh used to perform. He wore patched garments, made his bed out of a kind of plant and ate a kind of fruit collected from local trees, for cattle to eat. He said that he did so for three reasons. The first was for self-mortification, the second was that he considered

1. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqāt, p. 74.

2. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqāt, p.176.

his world and his time as full of evils, so he wanted to avoid falling unknowingly into them. The third reason was that he was following the example set by al-Salaf al-Sālih (companions of the Prophet). He was careful in doing justice to everybody and everything. He punished his son by tying him to a post in the hot sun because he was unjust to one of his wives, telling him that punishment in this world is easier than that after death. By doing all these things the Shaikh was setting an example for his followers.

The third stage was his performing of the Dhikr (invocation). This is not a feature peculiar to him since Dhikr is a general feature in all the Sufi orders. Shaikh Hamad Ibn al-Turābī<sup>1</sup> said about Shaikh Hamad Wad Umm Mariūm that he worshipped Allah neither for fear of Hell, nor out of longing for Paradise.

Another example was Shaikh Khojalī Ibn 'Abd al-Rahmān. This Shaikh combined the Qādirī and Shādhilī orders.<sup>2</sup> He was essentially a Qādirī initiated by Shaikh al-Zein Ibn Sighairūn. His behaviour as Ibn Dayf Allah put it was that of a Shādhilī because he had had a Shādhilī Shaikh as well known as Muhammad Ibn al-Nāsir al-Shādhilī. It is not made clear in at-Tabaqāt who Muhammad Ibn - al-Nāsir was. Probably he was not a Sudanese Shaikh otherwise he would have been mentioned in at-Tabaqāt.

Shaikh Khojalī's Shādhilī behaviour was reflected in his wearing splendid garments and using perfumes. He was told that the Qādirī wore rugged garments. He said "My garments tell the people that I am not in need of the people while the Qādirī garments tell the people that

1. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqāt, p.181.

2. " " " " , p.195.

they are in need of them."<sup>1</sup> He never stood up, as a sign of respect, for a Sultan or King, except for the Khalīfas of his two Shaikhs Idrīs Ibn al-Arbāb and Sighairūn. The features of his tariqah were patience and forbearance. When faced by any trouble he just repeated the Verse: "I confide my cause unto Allah. Lo! Allah is seer of (His) slave".<sup>2</sup> He forbade his followers ever to eat with anyone who did not say his prayers. He encouraged collective prayers and performed with his followers Dhikr al-Awqāt 'Dhikr after every prayer', and Rawātib (offices).

It has been made clear that the early Sufis in the Sudan were mainly concerned with teaching the essentials of Islam to their followers. There were no mystical formulations. But one of the features which characterized Sufism in this early stage was the performance of 'Karamāt' miracles. The *Tabaqāt* of Ibn Dayf Allah is full of stories about these miracles.

In his account about Shaikh Idrīs Ibn al-Arbāb,<sup>3</sup> Ibn Dayf Allah stated what seems to be a justification for his belief and other people's belief in the Shaikhs' miracles. He quoted al-Sha'arānī saying that the *Awliyās'* Kashf 'uncovering' is of two kinds. The first is that of the *Awliyā* who look directly into al-Lawh al-Mahfūz (Tower of Destiny) which is unchangeable. These are the *Awliyā* whose prophecies always come true. The second kind of Kashf is that of the *Awliyā* who look into alwāh al-Mahw wal Ithbat (Tablets of Extinction and Confirmation). These are three hundred and sixty in number and they are always changeable.

1. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-*Tabaqāt*, p.193.

2. " " " " , p. 44, Qur'an XL 44.

3. " " " " , p. 61.

Accordingly if any Wali predicted something and it didn't come true it shouldn't be said that he is a liar. It is only because he saw this thing in a changeable Lawh.

It is probable that this belief was shared by most of the people in the Sudan at that time. This gave the Shaikhs in the Sudan a strong and influential status among the public. In addition to being a spiritual guide the Shaikh performed many complicated tasks. He provided for the poor, healed the sick, interfered in troubles between the people and the political powers and sometimes helped in the natural disasters that took place. More than that a Shaikh was believed to be able to bring a dead person back to life again like Shaikh Hasan Ibn Hissuna who was said to have brought four dead persons to life.<sup>1</sup>

The people used to be sheltered and provided for by the Shaikhs. So the Shaikh formed a nucleus around which the people accumulated. This development drastically changed the social structure of the country as will be shown when discussing the influences of Sufism in the Sudan.

The status of the Shaikhs among the public also affected the government attitude. The Kings and Sultans of the Funj regarded the Shaikhs with the same respect. Realising how influential the Shaikhs were on the people, the Kings and Sultans did their best to befriend the Shaikhs. Not only this, but most of them believed in their spiritual influence. They encouraged them to come from other parts of the Sudan and settle in the Funj state. They offered them large areas of land, enough for them and their followers, and excluded them from taxation.<sup>2</sup> They also considered them as counsellors in their political affairs.<sup>3</sup>

1. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqāt, p.143.

2. " " " " , pp.235, 373.

3. " " " " , pp. 63, 123, 202.



This support in turn strengthened the people's belief in the Shaikhs. It encouraged them to cling to the Shaikhs to protect them from any injustice done to them by the government. Most of the Shaikhs were said to have been very influential in intervening in problems between the people and the government.<sup>1</sup>

Such a situation led to the development of an almost exaggerated atmosphere of Karamāt performance. Even after his death the Shaikh's Barakaḥ 'Holiness' was considered to continue. The Shaikh was venerated in the same way as when alive and his tomb was also considered a sort of holy place to visit.

Sufism continued to operate in this way during this early stage. Most of the effort was devoted to the experience of spiritual purity through ritual observance, rather than theorizing and formulating this experience into mystical expressions. It was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that Sufism began to take a new trend of development. The roots of this development were inherent in this early Sufism in spite of the simplicity and straightforwardness of its approach.

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1. Ibn Dayf Allah, at-Tabaqāt, pp.254, 193.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### THE SUFI ORDERS IN THE SUDAN

It was made clear previously that Sufism came to the Sudan side by side with the introduction of Islam as a new religion, and that Islam itself was preached by the Sufis. Before studying in detail the Sufi orders in the Sudan three main observations should be made. These three observations are vital to any approach to the study of Sufism in the Sudan.

The first observation is that the Sufi orders in the Sudan were not originally a Sudanese invention but they were, and are still, the familiar Islamic Sufi orders which prevailed all over the Islamic world from India and Arabia in the East, to Morocco in the West.<sup>1</sup>

The second observation is that the Sudanese adopted these orders as they reached the Sudan with slight changes which changed nothing of their original character.

The third observation is that no definitely new order which can be described as originally Sudanese ever existed in the Sudan.

The existing Sufi Orders in the Sudan are 'ṭa'ifas' organisations, depending on the essential orders only as source-schools. Sufism in general passed through three stages of development.<sup>2</sup> The first stage is that during which the master-pupil relationship was established. During this stage no centralized centres were established. The second stage was the ṭarīqah stage. The need for guidance under a director made it

1. For details about Islamic Sufi Orders see J.S. Trimingham, "The Sufi Orders in Islam".

2. J.S. Trimingham, 'Sufi Orders in Islam', p.103.

necessary for the once wandering groups to settle in a permanent centre. This affected the nature of the relationship between the guide and his followers, and transformed it into a more personal relationship. After the guide's death the centre might pass into a state of disintegration and the followers might disperse. This is a time when a *tariqah* might come into being. One of the disciples might found a centre, gather followers around him and start to carry on with the teachings and mystical exercises of the dead master. These activities might be ascribed to the dead master and eventually the *tariqah* would bear his name. This is how the Qādiriyya and Tijāniyya for example came into being as *tariqahs*.

This development also transformed Sufism into institutionalized orders. It also entails other changes in the features of Sufism. The first of these changes was the situation of the master and his relationship with his followers.

The direct companionship which characterized the moveable Sufi group disappeared when settlement was achieved. The masters developed a secluded life - they may not even initiate the disciples directly.<sup>1</sup> This led to the development of a certain cult around the master. He became more venerated, a thing which continued even after his death. Mystical beliefs were also attributed to him. The master was a 'Walī' protégé of God acquiring this status through the 'barakah' holiness emanating into him from the founder of the *tariqah*.

Another aspect of change in the features of Sufism is the relation of the master to the founder. The derivative Shaikhs were considered as the spiritual heirs of the founders.<sup>2</sup> Thus the process of handing over

1. J.S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p.27.

2. " " " " " " , p.10.

the care of the *tariqah* from one derivative Shaikh to another forms a continuous chain '*Silsilah*' which leads back to the founder. This is also an important point which helped in the development of Sufism as an institution. The chain which links the derivative Shaikh with the founder is known as the chain of benediction '*Silsilat al-Baraka*' as opposed to the chain of initiation '*Silsilat al-Wird*' which links the founder with one of the four *Khalifas* and the Prophet 'peace be upon him'.<sup>1</sup>

A third aspect of change was the development in the characteristics of the followers. The followers were aspirants who were interested in being initiated, and who dedicated their efforts to Sufism and the duties of the *tariqah*. Then the circle enlarged to include members who were allowed to continue their normal life.

The third stage in the development of Sufism is the *ta'ifah* stage to which Sufism in the Sudan belongs. The formation of *ta'ifahs* was an inevitable result of the appearance of the derivative *Khalifahs*. The *Khalifah* was considered to possess *barakah* 'holiness' emanating from the founder. Thus he was venerated and treated like a '*Wali*'. The concept of *Khilafah* became a matter of inheritance, sometimes a *Khalifah* was chosen from the master's family and sometimes from among the disciples. This led to disputes and, as a result, some disciples who considered themselves qualified for succession broke away. They formed derivative *ta'ifahs*. These continued to preach the master's *tariqah* but in the long run their own names might be ascribed and connected with the *tariqah* thus giving rise to an independent *ta'ifah* in name only.

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1. J.S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p.150.

This development characterized Sufism in the Sudan. Many tā'ifas emerged and dominated the religious life of the Sudan. The major Sufi orders which were regarded as source-schools for Sufism in the Sudan were the Qādiriyyah, Tijāniyyah and Idrīsiyyah.

#### THE QADIRIYYAH

It was founded by 'Abd al-Qādir Ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ of Jilān. 'Abd al-Qādir left no system or even a tariqah<sup>1</sup> after his death. He spent most of his life as a wandering ascetic in the deserts of Iraq. His fame as a preacher started when he was over fifty years old. He was famous as a Hanbalī preacher not as a Sufi.<sup>2</sup> The spread of his tariqah was achieved after his death through the formation of tā'ifahs in the Hijaz, Asia Minor and India.

The first to introduce the Qādiriyyah Order into the Sudan was Taj al-Dīn al-Bahārī al-Baghdādī.<sup>3</sup> Taj al-Dīn initiated into the Qādiriyyah order five Shaikhs. They were in order of initiation, Muhammad al-Hamīm, Ban an-Naqa al-Darīr, Shaikh 'Ajīb al-Kabīr al-Manjaluk, head of the 'Abd allāh tribe, Shaikh 'Abd Allāh al-Hammāl, grandfather of the famous Shaikh Hamad Wad-at-Turābī, and al-Hijāzī, the founder of the town of Arbajī.<sup>4</sup>

These Shaikhs were founders of famous families who until now, consider themselves as followers of the Qādiriyyah Order.<sup>5</sup>

1. J.S. Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p.43.

2. The same reference, p.42.

3. *Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allah*, p.127.

4. *Tabaqat Ibn Dayf Allah*, p.128.

5. 'Abd al-Qādir Maḥmūd, *al-Tawā'if al-Sūfiyya fī al-Sūdān*, p.6.

There are confusing reports in at-Ṭabaqāt about who was the first to light the fire of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in the Sudan. As mentioned previously the first Khalīfah of Ṭāj al-Dīn al-Bahārī in the Sudan was Muḥammad al-Hamīm. According to Ibn Dayf Allah this Khilāfah continued in al-Hamīm's family, and the continuation of the tariqah itself was undertaken by the family of Ban an-Naqa al-Darīr, the second Shaikh to be initiated directly by al-Bahārī.

Shaikh Khojalī related that the first to light the fire of 'Abd al-Qādir was Shaikh Idrīs Ibn al-Arbāb.<sup>1</sup> Shaikh Idrīs was the most famous of all the Shaikhs of his period. His tomb in al-'Ailafūn is still revered as a place of barakah. Shaikh Idrīs was said to be a follower of Ban an-Naqa al-Darīr, but his saintship was said to have occurred without the mediumship of a Shaikh. The reports in at-Ṭabaqāt about his saintship differ. At first Ibn Dayf Allah said that it was reported that Shaikh Idrīs acquired his saintship directly from the Prophet 'peace be upon him'. Others said that he was initiated by a man who came to him from Morocco known as 'Abd al-Kāfī.<sup>2</sup> The second Shaikh to keep the fire of 'Abd al-Qādir ablaze was Badawī Wad Abū Dilaiq.<sup>3</sup> The story of how this Shaikh was permitted to light the fire of 'Abd al-Qādir is given in at-Ṭabaqāt, told by Shaikh Badawī himself. He said: "My uncle Shaikh Abū Dilaiq died. I collected his Fuqarā 'followers' and built a qubbah 'dome' over his tomb. I went into that qubbah for a retreat 'khalwah' for forty days. During this time Shaikh Idrīs Ibn al-Arbāb died. While I was in the retreat I heard a voice telling me that I had received a trust

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1. Ṭabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allah, p.56.

2. Ṭabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allah, p.41.

3. Ṭabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allah, p.41.

"Amanah" with Shaikh Idrīs and that I had to go and collect it from him. This was repeated many times, so I collected the 'fuqarā' followers and decided to perform a visit 'ziyārah' to Shaikh Idrīs' tomb. When we reached there I washed my clothes and body and went into the qubbah 'dome' of Shaikh Idrīs. While sitting there I felt as if I was sleepy. At this moment I saw the dome full of Awliyā' of whom I recognized only four. These were Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Shaikh Idrīs, Shaikh Hasan Wad Hassuna and Shaikh 'Abd al-Rāziq. Then Shaikh al-Zain Ibn Sighairun arrived. They asked him why he had come and he said because he was my master. Then they asked me to sit on a golden chair. Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir asked Shaikh Idrīs to hand over the fire to me. Shaikh Idrīs gave me a piece of wood with smoke at its end. Then he asked Shaikh Hassan to give me the sword of his wilāyah and that of his power. Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir then asked them whether they approved of my Wilāyah or not. They said they accepted it."<sup>1</sup>

The third Shaikh to whom the responsibility of keeping the fire of 'Abd al-Qādir was offered was Shaikh Sālīh Ibn Ban An-Naqa.<sup>2</sup> The story of how this Shaikh was given permission to light the fire of 'Abd al-Qādir was found in a document in his own handwriting as Ibn Dayf Allah said. The story goes as follows. "While I was in a 'Khalwah' (seclusion) I saw myself in Medina. I tried to see the Prophet 'peace be upon him' but the guard forbade me. The Prophet 'peace be upon him' ordered him to let me in. I went in and found the Prophet 'peace be upon him' sitting facing the 'qiblah'. With him was Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Shaikh Idrīs Ibn al-Arbāb, my father Ban-an-Naqa, al-Khadir 'peace be upon him' and

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1. Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allah, p.117.

2. " " " " , p.238.

'Alī Ibn Abū Tālib. The Prophet 'peace be upon him' asked me to massage his right side. I said "I massage your side?" He said, Yes, because you are always blessing me". Then he asked Jabril 'peace be upon him' to put a white turban on my head and tie it with a thread. I said: "Oh Prophet am I of the same quality as your thread?" He said: "If you are not, who is going to respect you?" Then he ordered the men who were sitting with him to present me with their offerings. Shaikh Idrīs offered me the sword of his power, Shaikh Hasan offered me the sword of his Wilāyah and Shaikh 'Abd al-Rāziq offered me the sword of his power. Then the Prophet 'peace be upon him' asked Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī to bring the fire from Shaikh Badawī Wad Abū Dilaig. 'Abd al-Qādir sent for the fire to be brought from Baghdad. It was brought in a red diamond. Shaikh Badawī came after Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir and said he wanted to keep the fire for his son. Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir told him that his son was not present, so he would not give him the fire. It was meant for me." Shaikh Ṣālih continued, "If you ask about my conjunction 'Wisāl' with the Prophet 'peace be upon him', Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir and al-Khadīr 'peace be upon him', it was through my father Shaikh Ban an-Naqa al-Darīr".<sup>1</sup>

From the similar stories told by both the Qādirī Shaikhs two facts may be established. The first is that both the Shaikhs were trying to emphasise the chain 'Silsilah' or mystical connection which gives support and authority to their leadership. The other fact is that the lighting of the fire of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī was considered a concept different from being a follower or even a Qādirī Shaikh, that is to say not every Qādiriyya Shaikh could light the fire. Although many Shaikhs in at-Tabaqāt were followers of the Qādiriyya order, yet those who lighted the fire had

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1. Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allah, p.241.



done so only by a certain kind of permission like that which was told of by the two Shaikhs in their visions.

None of the first Qādiriyyah Shaikhs in the Sudan had made any attempt to write about the Qādiriyyah Order as an order or even about its features or doctrine. As was said earlier their contribution in this field was only compilation, additions or comments on the earlier writings of the earlier Sufis.

At its earlier stage the Qādiriyyah in the Sudan remained only as a tariqah adopted by individuals who preached what they had received from their masters. With the beginning of the nineteenth century this tariqah began to influence the Sudan in the form of a tā'ifah.

This started when a new Qādiriyyah tā'ifah began to operate in the Sudan. This tā'ifah was called the Qādiriyyah as-Sammāniyyah. It originated in the Hijaz and was essentially a Khalwātiyyah tā'ifah and was founded by Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Karīm as-Samman (AD 1718-75). Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Karīm was a follower of Mustafā Ibn Kamāl ad-dīn al-Bakrī who was a Syrian Khalwātī.<sup>1</sup>

After al-Bakri's death his follower Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Karīm as-Samman set up his own tā'ifah which was called after him as-Sammāniyyah.

As-Sammāniyyah was introduced into the Sudan by Shaikh Ahmad at-Tayyib Ibn al-Bashīr (1739-1824). Ahmad at-Tayyib developed the Sammāniyyah tā'ifah into a tā'ifah bearing his own name in the Sudan known as at-Tayyibiyyah. It became one of the famous tā'ifahs in the Sudan and has continued to influence the people up to the present time.

The Sammāniyyah tariqah seemed to be embracing many tariqahs. These tariqahs are the Qādiriyyah, Naqshabandiyyah and Khalwātiyyah. This is

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1. J.S. Trimingham, The Sufi Orders in Islam, p.77.

clear from what was written by 'Abd al-Mahmūd Nūr ad-Dā'im, the grandson of Shaikh at-Tayyib, in his book Azāhir ar-Riyād in which he wrote about the Tayyibiyyah as-Sammāniyyah tā'ifah.

All these tariqas were taught by Shaikh 'Abd al-Karīm as-Sammān to Shaikh at-Tayyib. The Qādiriyyah was regarded as the essence of the Sammāniyyah. As-Sammāniyyah is founded on dhikr 'invocation', riyādah 'practice', hunger, Khalwah 'seclusion' and tawādu 'humility'.

The essential part in this tariqah is that the initiate should always remember the greatness of Allah. This is considered important since the remembrance of Allah's greatness is a factor in bringing the self under the control of the spirit. The follower should also empty his heart completely of all secular things and should consider the world as if it didn't exist at all. The stress in this tariqah is on the heart. This is partly because the Sufis consider the heart as superior to the brain. The Sammāniyyah tā'ifah in this case considers the heart as the abode in which resides the true knowledge of Allah.<sup>1</sup>

The Dhikr in this tariqah consists of five parts:

- 1 - al-Istighfār 'asking forgiveness'
- 2 - as-Salāt 'alā 'n-nabī 'calling down blessings upon the Prophet'
- 3 - Tahlīl : Lā ilāha illa 'llāh 'There is no god but God'
- 4 - Yā Allah 'O God'
- 5 - Yā Huwa 'O He'.

Each of these parts divides into three sections, major, intermediate and minor according to the aspiration of the disciple. These three sections indicate the number of times the disciple might repeat the formulas of dhikr.

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1. 'Abd al-Mahmūd Nūr ad-Dā'im, Azāhir ar-Riyād, p.86.

Another form of dhikr is Dhikr al-Fanā' and al-baqā'. This is the repetition of the five parts mentioned above in a more intensive form, day and night. This Dhikr involves certain rules which were established by Shaikh El-Tayyib Ibn al-Bashīr.<sup>1</sup> These rules are : -

- 1 - Sincerity 'ikhlas', truthfulness 'sidq', and the companionship of a Shaikh 'arif bi-Allah' i.e. a gnostic.
- 2 - Cleanliness, the performance of the ablution, facing the qiblah 'direction for prayers' and silence.
- 3 - The 'murīd' should always imagine the presence of the Prophet 'peace be upon him', and that of his Shaikh while performing the Dhikr.
- 4 - The 'murīd' shouldn't proceed from one part of Dhikr to the other until the Shaikh has told him to do so, or until he receives divine permission in the form of hātif or ilhām 'personal inspiration' or by permission from the Prophet 'peace be upon him'.

Each of the parts of this Dhikr has certain revelations and emanations 'fuyudāt' which might be achieved by the 'murīd' who follows these rules exactly. The final goal of this type of Dhikr is 'al-fanā' 'passing away from all worldly existence, and 'al-baqā' a lasting subsistence in the divine presence.

The stages through which the self passes in the Sammāniyyah tariqah are three.<sup>2</sup> These three stages may be passed only by the 'murīd' who performs Dhikr al-fanā and al-baqā'.

The first stage is the upbraiding soul 'al-nafs al-lawwāmah. It is the soul which upbraids the person for being sinful. The release from this self is attained while the 'murīd' is repeating the third part of Dhikr

1. 'Abd al-Mahmūd Nūr ad-Dā'im, Azāhīr ar-Riyād, p.87.

2. " " " " " " " " " " , p.78.

"Lā illāha ilā Allāh" 'There is no god but God'. When the 'murīd' gets rid of this 'Nafs Lawwamah' and its attributes he is said to have passed into the second stage.

The second stage is 'al-nafs al-mulhamah', the inspired soul. This is the soul which guides the 'murīd' to be righteous and good. During this stage the 'murīd' may receive some emanations. He is said to be in the stage of intoxication 'sukr'. This state of soul is achieved while the 'murīd' is performing the fourth stage of Dhikr, repeating 'Yā Allah' 'O God'.

The 'murīd' then passes into the third stage which is 'al-nafs al-mutma'innah', the tranquil soul. This soul is described as the soul which has penetrated the veil,<sup>1</sup> and has surrendered to Allah and righteousness. It is regarded as the first step towards attaining true knowledge of Allah. This state of soul is gained while the 'murīd' is repeating the fifth stage of Dhikr, repeating 'Yā Huwa' "O He".

The second tariqah which is embraced in as-Sammāniyyah tariqah is an-Naqshabandiyyah. It is called the Sahābah order, 'tariqat as-Sahābah'.<sup>2</sup> The features of this tariqah are:-

- 1 - Complete submission to Allah referred to as external and internal enslavement. This feature is in fact an important element in Sufism as a whole and not limited to a certain tariqah. Yet the author of Azāhīr ar-Riyāḍ listed it as a feature of an-Naqshabandiyya tariqah which seems to have been a complementary tariqah for as-Sammāniyyah.

1. 'Abd al-Mahmūd Nūr ad-Dā'im, Azāhīr ar-Riyāḍ, p.87.

2. " " " " " " " " " , p.88.

The 'Murīd' should always live in the presence of Allah by ignoring completely the existence of the world.

2 - The second feature is the following of Sunnah 'traditions' of the Prophet 'peace be upon him' as his ideal example in everything.

3 - The third feature is that the 'murīd' should be guided by a master; this is also a general feature of Sufism as a whole. Before being initiated the 'murīd' should repent of all his previous sins.

Another tariqah which is blended into as-Sammāniyyah tariqah is al-Khalwātiyyah which was spread in Egypt by Mustafā Ibn Kamāl ad-Dīn al-Bakrī the master of as-Samman, founder of as-Sammāniyyah<sup>1</sup>. This tariqah differs from the other two tariqahs only in the number of litanies 'awrād' and 'adhkar'. It also differs in the number of the stages through which the soul progresses.

These stages are seven known as 'an-nafs al-ammārah', the unregenerate soul, 'an-nafs al-lawwamah', the blameworthy soul, 'an-nafs al-mulhamah', the inspired soul, 'an-nafs al-mutma'innah', the tranquil soul, 'an-nafs al-rādiyyah', the contented soul, 'an-nafs al-mardiyyah', the approved soul, and finally 'an-nafs al-kāmilah', the perfect soul.

Each of these stages is passed through by performing a certain dhikr. These dhikrs are:-

- 1 - There is no god but God 'La illāha illa'llāh' for the control of the first stage 'an-nafs al-ammārah'.
- 2 - Yā Allāh 'O God' for the control of the second stage 'an-nafs al-lawwamah'.
- 3 - 'Huwa' He, for the control of the third stage 'an-nafs al-mulhamah'.

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1. J.S. Trimingham, The Sufi Orders in Islam, p.77.

- 4 - 'Ḥaqqan' from Ḥaqq 'The Real', for the control of the fourth stage 'an-nafs al-mutma'innah'.
- 5 - 'Ḥayyan' from Ḥayy 'Alive', for the control of the fifth stage 'an-nafs al-rādiyah'.
- 6 - 'Qayyūman' from Qayyūm 'The Eternal', for the control of the sixth stage 'an-nafs al-mardiyyah'.
- 7 - 'Qahhāran' from Qahhār 'the Subduer', for the control of the seventh stage 'an-nafs al-kāmilah'.

The initiate who could achieve the seventh stage would be considered as achieving the state of Qutb 'axis'.<sup>1</sup>

These are the three tariqahs which constitute the Qādiriyyah as-Sammanīyyah in the Sudan. Shaikh at-Tayyib Ibn al-Bashīr the head of as-Sammanīyyah in the Sudan was initiated into these tariqahs by his master 'Abd al-Karīm as-Samman founder of as-Sammanīyyah.

In addition Shaikh at-Tayyib is said to have had a tariqah of his own known as al-Ismiyyah. It is said that he had been initiated into it by al-Khadīr 'peace be upon him'.<sup>2</sup> It is called al-Ismiyyah because the dhikr in this tariqah is not by the name 'Allah' but by the remaining ninety eight Divine Names. It contains the meanings and secrets of all these names.

In spite of this combination of tariqahs in as-Sammanīyyah tariqah it is famous only as the Qādiriyyah as-Sammanīyyah in the Sudan.

It is clear that the Qādiriyyah in the Sudan took two directions. The first is that of the Qādiriyyah proper which was known sometimes as al-Jilāniyyah and which was founded by Tāj ad-Dīn al-Bahārī. The second

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1. 'Abd al-Mahmūd Nūr ad-Dā'im, Azāhīr ar-Riyād, p.106.

2. " " " " " " , p.116.

is the Qādiriyyah as-Sammāniyyah which formed an independent tā'ifah, the Tayibiyyah through which it mainly preached the Qādiriyyah. It has the largest number of followers up to the present time.

The Qādiriyyah in the Sudan is divided into several local subsections. Each of these subsections constituted a separate family which became an independent tā'ifah and dominated the area in which it flourished. For example the family of Shaikh at-Tayyib Ibn al-Bashīr<sup>is</sup> the founder of the Sammāniyyah. The followers of the Sammāniyyah are mainly around the White and Blue Niles and Dar Kababīsh.<sup>1</sup>

The fame of at-Tayyib's family survived through the system of the hereditary Khilāfah. The Khalīfah continued to be chosen from within the family. For example the Khalīfah of Shaikh at-Tayyib was his son Nūr ad-Dā'im. Nūr ad-Dā'im was succeeded by his son 'Abd al-Mahmūd. This family Khilāfah has continued up to the present time. The contemporary Khalīfah of as-Sammāniyyah tā'ifah is Muhammad al-Fātiḥ Qarīb Allāh, a great grandson of Shaikh at-Tayyib.<sup>2</sup>

Another Sammāniyyah family is that of al-Ya'aqubāb in Sennār, founded by Shaikh Ya'aqūb Ibn 'Alī ad-Duwaiḥī a student of Shaikh at-Tayyib.<sup>3</sup> The Badrāb family is also one of the famous Qādiriyyah-Sammāniyyah families. It was founded by Shaikh al-'Ubaid Wad Badr who was initiated into this tariqah by Shaikh 'Awad al-Jīd of 'Efaina.<sup>4</sup> The Badrāb have got one of the most famous Sufi centres in the Sudan in a village called Umm Dubbān near Khartoum, the capital.

1. Mahmūd Brelvi, Islam in Africa, p.166.

2. 'Abd al-Qādir Mahmūd, at Tawā'if as-Sūf iyya fī as-Sūdān, p.35.

3. 'Abd al-Qādir Mahmūd, " " " , p.35.

4. J.S.Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.220.

Another famous Sammāniyyah family was that of al-Mahdī. The significance of this family is that its founder Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdī had developed his Sufic beliefs and experiences into a new concept. That is he claimed to be the long awaited Mahdi. Muhammad Ahmad was born around the middle of the nineteenth century (1845-1885) in the province of Dongola. His family laid claim to descent from the Prophet 'peace be upon him'. His father moved from Dongola to Kararī, a town North of Umm Durman, where he continued with his job as a carpenter. When he died he left Muhammad Ahmad a five year old boy.

Muhammad Ahmad (al-Mahdī) was initiated into the Sammāniyyah tariqah by Shaikh Muhammad Sharīf a descendant of Shaikh at-Tayyib Ibn al-Bashīr. He settled in al-Gazira Abba, in the White Nile, where he devoted himself to religious exercises. He collected around him a considerable number of followers. Then his troubles with his master started. His master Shaikh Muhammad Sharīf said: "When Muhammad Ahmad's followers increased he was full of pride and the devil deceived him by making him think of himself as the greatest person on earth and that he was the expected Mahdī. He told me secretly that he wanted to declare himself the Mahdī and asked me to support him and be his counsellor, but I forbade him. When he refused to listen to me, I brought him in front of a number of Shaikhs and warned him of the consequences of his behaviour. Again he ignored my advice and carried on with his plans".<sup>1</sup>

In spite of his master's warning the Mahdī continued with what he had decided to do. The misunderstanding which occurred between the Mahdī and his master didn't affect his Sufi upbringing. Although he was expelled by his master Muhammad Sharīf from the Sammāniyyah tariqah,<sup>2</sup> he attached himself

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1. 'Abd al-Qādir Mahmūd, al-fikr as-Sufī fī as-Sūdān, p.104.

2. J.S.Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.94.



to another Sammāni, Shaikh al-Qurashī, and succeeded this Shaikh as Khalīfah.

Most of the studies on al-Mahdī are devoted to the political career of al-Mahdī, another aspect of his mission in which he was so triumphant. But it should be stressed that the success which Muhammad Ahmad achieved in politics was brought about mainly by the religious factor. In his religious approach to the prevailing problems of his time Muhammad Ahmad depended mostly on his Sufi teachings, a thing which was in keeping with Sudanese religious sentiment at that time. Although he kept himself within the scope of Sufism, yet he gave Sufism in the Sudan a new role which it hadn't had before. This role was the holy war "jihād" both against the foreign infidels who ruled the Sudan 'the Turks and British', and against the Sudanese Moslems whom the Mahdī considered as infidels as well, since they were Moslems only in name.

The factors which led to his success were essentially Sufi. This is reflected clearly in his letters to his followers. Many Sufis claimed to be initiated into the path by the Prophet 'peace be upon him', like Ahmad at-Tijānī founder of the Tijāniyyah order.<sup>1</sup> Some Sudanese Sufis even claimed this as was shown earlier. So also was the case with Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdī who claimed that he was initiated into Mahdism by the Prophet 'peace be upon him'. To support his claim he told of a revelation concerning this issue in a letter to the people. He said:

"The Prophet 'peace be upon him' told me that I am the awaited Mahdī 'al-Mahdī al-Muntazar', and appointed me to succeed him by repeatedly making me sit on his chair in the presence of the four Caliphs, the Qutbs 'axes' and al Khadīr 'peace be upon him'. God helped me with His

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1. J.M. Abun Nasr, The Tijāniyya, p.31.

favourite angels, with the saints both living and dead from Adam to this day, and likewise by the believing Jinn. In time of war the Prophet 'peace be upon him' will appear in person with them before my army. The Prophet 'peace be upon him' gave me the sword of victory, and I was told that none, neither men nor Jinn can defeat me when it is with me. The Prophet 'peace be upon him' said to me: "God has made for you a sign of Mahdism", and it is the dark spot on my right cheek. Another sign is that a flash of light will appear carried by 'Azrā'īl' and will be with me in time of war. With it God will strengthen my followers and terrify my enemies."<sup>1</sup>

In all this Muhammad Ahmad was seeking support for his claim. Comparing his account of initiation with those of Shaikh Badawī Wad Abū Dilaig and Shaikh Salih Ibn Ban Naqa given at the beginning of this chapter one may notice that the Mahdī had followed in the footsteps of his predecessors. The only difference is that those Shaikhs were initiated into Shaikhship while Muhammad Ahmad was initiated into Mahdism. The atmosphere of his initiation was rather exaggerated. While the two above mentioned Shaikhs were initiated in the presence of the late Shaikhs from the Sudan, Muhammad Ahmad was initiated in a more splendid gathering. There is no mention of a fire of 'Abd al-Qādir to be lighted, or a sword of the 'Wilāyah' of another Shaikh to be handed on to him. He was the Mahdī and his mission was not limited to a certain place. This is why Muhammad Ahmad had given his message a sense of universality. He was seated on the Prophet's seat many times. The sword of victory was handed to him directly by the Prophet 'peace be upon him'. He was supported by the angels, human beings and Moslem Jinn as well.

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1. Manshūrāt al-Mahdī, Part I, p. 11.

His initiation was not that of an ordinary Khilāfah of a dead Walī, but as he called it in his message to the people 'al-Khilāfat al-Kubrā' The grand Khilāfah.<sup>1</sup> He considered himself a direct Khalīfah of the Prophet 'peace be upon him'. Even in this case it is not like the Khilāfah of the four Caliphs. He said "You should know that my position as a Khalīfah of the Prophet 'peace be upon him' is different from the Khilāfah of his four Caliphs".<sup>2</sup> Yet he didn't clarify its nature except in the sense that it was 'al-Khilāfat al-Kubrā'.

In his letters Muhammad Ahmad never referred to Sufism or the Sufis. Yet he brought nothing new beyond the Sufi education he had achieved as a Sammāniyyah follower. There are some differences which were the inevitable results of the nature of his call. The first of these differences is that Muhammad Ahmad didn't establish a permanent Sufi centre nor did he concern himself with the initiation of followers only. His essential issue was the holy war 'Jihād'. His ambitions were too great to be contained within the boundaries of a Sufi centre. He was the Mahdī who through direct revelations and communication with the Prophet 'peace be upon him', was ordered to establish a divine state in the Sudan and other Islamic countries. He considered his rise as that of the Prophet 'peace be upon him' and his time like his. He told his followers:<sup>3</sup>

"Remember, my beloved, that nothing remained of Islam but its name, and nothing remained of the Qur'an but its scripture. So God the beneficent saved you all by my time which is linked with the Prophet's time 'peace be upon him'". Thus his time was the Jāhiliyyah 'dark age' of the Prophet's

1. Manshūrāt al-Mahdī, Part I, p.11.

2. " " " I, p.264.

3. " " " I, pp.51-52.

time 'peace be upon him'.

Another difference was the nature of his followers. The followers of a Sufi constitute initiates, the Qur'ān students and those who simply want to serve the Shaikh and live dependent on the centre, known as 'fuqarā' in the Sudan. The Mahdi's view of his followers was a direct result of his above-mentioned belief. His followers were at first called Darāwīsh because of the patched Juba 'Muraqqa'a' they wore.<sup>1</sup> Then Muhammad Ahmad issued a decree<sup>2</sup> changing their name to a name relevant to his mission. That was al-Ansār, like the Prophet's followers 'peace be upon him'. He described them as: "supporters of Allah's religion", 'Ansār Dīn Allāh' whose hearts long for what Allah has prepared for them. They realised the fact that this world is not everlasting. Their hearts are brightened and lighted with the desire for the after-life. So they shouldn't be called 'Darāwīsh' because they are wise, sane and upright."

Another difference is that Muhammad Ahmad didn't authorize his claim through a Sufi chain of attribution "Isnād", which linked him with the founder of the Qādiriyyah tariqah into which he was initiated, and then with the Prophet 'peace be upon him'. Instead he claimed direct relation to the Prophet 'peace be upon him'.

The medium through which he received his order was the Prophet 'peace be upon him', himself. Muhammad Ahmad said: "The Prophet 'peace be upon him' told me of my Grand Khilāfah 'al-Khilāfat al-Kubrā' while I was awake, not sick, nor in a state of attraction 'Jadhb', intoxication 'sukr' or madness, but in a state of complete sanity".<sup>3</sup>

1. J.S. Trimmingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.152.

2. Manshūrāt al-Mahdī, Part 3, p.171.

3. " " " I, p. 13.

Another difference was in the way he appointed his khalīfahs.

A Sufi Shaikh usually appoints a number of khalīfahs to help him in the administration of the tariqah's affairs. Muhammad Ahmad who considered himself a direct Khalīfah of the Prophet 'peace be upon him', appointed four khalīfahs representing the four orthodox Caliphs of the Prophet 'peace be upon him'. He called his first khalīfah 'Abd Allāh' Khalīfat as-Siddīq, i.e. khalīfah of Abū Bakr<sup>1</sup> and his second khalīfah 'Alī Wad Hilu' khalīfat al-Fārūq i.e. Khalīfah of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of all these differences, which are not essential, Muhammad Ahmad's teachings remained purely Sufic. He, like the Sufis, emphasised the absolute supremacy of God and this is apparent in all his letters. In one of these letters he directly expounded the Sufi doctrine of the divine Oneness. He said: "My beloved; it is certain that the universe with all it constitutes will vanish and nothing will remain but the Face of Allah. The universe is essentially non-existent; there is nothing but Allah. Even in its existence the universe depends on Allah. So it is essentially non-existent and it will not survive".<sup>3</sup>

Muhammad Ahmad also adopted the Sufi doctrine of the Muhammadan Light 'al-Nūr al-Muhammadi' or 'al-haqiqah al-Muhammadiyah'. He said that the Prophet 'peace be upon him' had told him that he was created from the light of the inmost depth of the Prophet's heart.<sup>4</sup>

This concept of Muhammadan Light emphasises that the Muhammadan Light was the first thing Allah had created. This light was incarnated in every

1. Manshūrāt al-Mahdī, Part I, p.30.

2. " " " 3, p.34.

3. " " " I, p.89.

4. " " " p.12.

Prophet from Adam onwards until it was finally and perfectly manifested in the Prophet Muhammad 'peace be upon him'. Although every Prophet was the perfect man 'al-Insān al-Kāmil' of his time, yet the Prophet Muhammad 'peace be upon him' was and is the final and absolute manifestation of this perfection.<sup>1</sup>

Muhammad Ahmad revealed his knowledge of this Sufi concept in a letter to his followers concerning the prayers upon the Prophet 'peace be upon him' 'al salāt 'alā an-Nabī'. He said to them:-

"Don't think that the Prophet 'peace be upon him' benefits anything from your prayers for him. This is because all the human lights and actions are only a manifestation and only a drop in the oceans of his light. He is the Perfect Man. There is nothing left incomplete in him for us to ask Allah to give him. It was only through this inherent perfection that the Prophet 'peace be upon him' was able to see Allah in this world."<sup>2</sup>

Even those who seek the knowledge of Allah will never attain such an honour in this world because they will never be absolutely perfect. In seeking the knowledge of Allah, they will only attain a certain degree of perfection. They will be completely perfect only in the after-life where they will be near and see Allah, each according to the degree of knowledge he has achieved".

Muhammad Ahmad continued his letter saying, "All the world and you human beings are a manifestation of the Prophet's light. You will only benefit from this quality by strengthening your relation with the Prophet 'peace be upon him'. Love him, pray for him and by so doing you will be brightened by his light and be absorbed in him to the extent that you will

1. J.S.Trimingham, The Sufi Orders in Islam, p.161.

2. Referring to Al-Isrā "The Nocturnal Journey of the Prophet".

feel that it is not you but the Prophet that is praying".<sup>1</sup>

Like the Sufis, Muhammad Ahmad insisted on the renunciation of this world, through asceticism as a means to perfection in the other world. In nearly every letter he kept reminding the people of the futility of this world compared with the after-life. He also considered 'Dhikr' as essential.

#### THE TIJANIYYAH : -

This order didn't acquire a strong hold in the Sudan like the Qādiriyyah, although it has a considerable number of followers. The Tijāniyyah was founded in Morocco by Abu'l-'Abbās Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn al-Mukhtār at-Tijānī, who was born in 'Ain Mādi in the south of Algeria (1737).<sup>2</sup> Before founding his order he became affiliated to many orders. He joined the Qādiriyyah, Nāsiriyyah, and the tarīqah of Ahmad al-Habīb Ibn Muhammad. He was initiated into the Khalwātiyyah order by a Khalwātī Muqaddam known as Muhammad Ibn 'Abd ar-Rahmān and he visited Muhammad al-Kurdī, chief of the Khalwātiyyah in Egypt.<sup>3</sup> Then he returned to Algiers and settled in Tlemsen. He was expelled from Tlemsen by the Turkish ruler and he then settled in the Oasis of Abī Samghon, where he received permission to establish his independent order. He was said to have seen the Prophet 'peace be upon him' who told him to give up his affiliation to other tarīqahs. He also told him that he was his direct mediator and provider in knowledge, owing no favour to any Shaikh.

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1. J.S.Trimingham, The Sufi Orders in Islam, p.107.

2. J.M.Abun Nasr, The Tijāniyya, p.6.

3. " " " " " , p.17.

Ahmad at-Tijānī claimed that he was the Axis of axes 'Qutb al-Aqtāb' and the Seal of Muhammadan sainthood 'Khātim al-Wilāyāt-al-Muhammadiyah'. He considered his tariqah as the seal or 'last of the turuq'.<sup>1</sup>

The essentials of the Tijāniyyah as the last of the tariqahs are reflected in the rules which should be strictly observed by anyone who wants to join the order. These rules are:-

- a - The affiliate should be a Moslem.
- b - He should be granted permission by his parents to join the order. This is because the obedience of parents is in second place only to the belief in one God: "Thy God hath decreed, that ye worship none save Him, and (that ye show) kindness to your parents".<sup>2</sup>
- c - He should never take the 'wird' litany from a non-authorized Tijānī Shaikh, nor have any link with another Shaikh other than his own.
- d - He shouldn't perform a visit to any saint 'Walī' dead or alive.
- e - He should be careful in performing his prayers with his Tijānī fellows.
- f - He should never develop a sense of security from the guile of God, because however much one is favoured by God, he might be exposed to God's test. A true Tijānī should live in both the states of fear of and trust in God.
- g - A Tijānī is required to recite the litanies "Awrad" twice every day, in the morning and evening.

1. Muhammad Ibn 'Abd Allāh ash-Shāfi'i, al-Fath ar-Rabbānī, p.16.

2. Qur'ān, XVII, 23.



- h - He should believe in all that concerns the founder, because everything he did was an order from the Prophet 'peace be upon him'.
- i - He should never criticize any aspect of the tarīqah, otherwise he would be deprived of its benefits.
- j - He shouldn't recite the prayers "Jawharat al-Kamāl" without ablution "Wuḍū".
- l - He shouldn't attempt to initiate others without being granted permission to do so. Any member who does so and doesn't repent, would have an adverse end to his life "Yamūtu 'alā sū'al-Khātimah" that is to say before death he would commit apostasy "Irtidād".
- m - A Tijānī should not reveal the 'wird' litany of the tarīqah to anybody else outside the group.<sup>1</sup>

The Tijāniyyah dhikr 'invocation' consists of two formulas. The first is the following:-

- al-Istighfār 'Penitence' (a hundred times)
- Lā illāha illa Allāh "There is no god but God" (a hundred times)
- A prayer for the Prophet 'peace be upon him' in the form of Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ 'prayer of the Opener' (Muḥammad)

The second formula is called 'Wazīfah' office; it is performed daily as well. It consists of:-

- al-Istighfār 'Penitence' (thirty times).
- 'Ṣalāt al-Fātiḥ' (fifty times).
- The 'hailalah' 'There is no god but God' (a hundred times), and reciting the prayer called 'Jawharat al-Kamāl' (twelve times).

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1. Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Shāfi'ī, al-Fath ar-Rabbānī, pp.127-128.

The Tijāniyyah was introduced into the Sudan mainly by the Moroccan and Mauritanian pilgrims who passed through the Sudan on their way to the Hijaz.<sup>1</sup> It was first introduced by a Tunisian called Sidi al-Bashīr Ibn Sidi Muhammad. This Shaikh met al-Hājj 'Umar Tall, a famous Tijānī leader in West Africa, in Mecca in 1832 and got acquainted with him. When he heard about Hājj 'Umar's holy wars he went to West Africa and stayed with Hājj 'Umar for some time. Then he left there for Egypt. On his way he passed through the Sudan and decided to stay for a time. During this stay he initiated many people into the Tijāniyyah, and appointed four muqaddams 'sectional leaders' who helped in spreading the tariqah in their region.<sup>2</sup>

Another Shaikh who helped in establishing the Tijāniyyah in the Sudan was a Mauritanian merchant called Muhammad Ibn al-Mukhtār ash-Shinqīṭī famous as Wad al-'Alīyya after his mother's name. He arrived in the town of Berber around the year 1880. He then moved to the Ja'alīn district North of Khartoum where he married and settled.<sup>3</sup> He initiated into the Tijāniyyah three Shaikhs in his area. They were Shaikh Ahmad 'Abd ar-Rahmān, Shaikh Tāhir al-Himādī, and Shaikh Ahmad Hāshim. In the White Nile area he initiated al-Faqīh Hasan, 'Abd ar-Rahīm and Shaikh Hāmid al-Kinānī. In Kordufān Province he initiated ash-Sharīf Husain.<sup>4</sup>

The spreading of the Tijāniyyah in the Western region of the Sudan was largely connected with the flourishing of the order in West Africa. A Mauritanian known as Mawlūd Fāl introduced this order in Kordufān. Mawlūd Fāl was an active disciple of Muhammad al-Hāfiz who introduced

1. Tariq al-Haqq, magazine, edited by Muhammad al-Hāfiz at-Tijānī first edition, p.25 (1961).

2. J.Abun-Nasr, The Tijāniyya, p.158.

3. J.M.Abun Nasr, " , p.158.

4. Muhammad al-Hāfiz at-Tijānī, Tariq al-Haqq, p.25 (first edition, 1961).

the Tijāniyyah in Mauritania after being initiated by Ahmad at-Tijānī, the founder. Mawlūd Fāl initiated the famous West African Tijānī warrior Hājj 'Umar Ibn Saīd al-Fūtī.<sup>1</sup> Mawlūd Fāl visited Kurdufān where he met a famous Shaikh known as Muḥammad Wad Dulīb. Muḥammad Wad Dulīb was a revered personality in this region and was surrounded by a large number of students. He was said to have some knowledge about Sufism, but was not an affiliate to a definite order.

His initiation by Mawlūd Fāl into the Tijāniyyah was a great achievement for the order, since Muḥammad Wad Dulīb undertook the task of spreading it among his numerous followers. One of his famous students was Muḥammad Wad az-Zakī the master of Shaikh Muḥammad al-Badawī, a prominent Tijānī Shaikh in the Sudan.<sup>2</sup>

Muḥammad al-Badawī was born in al-Obayid in Kordufān province in 1851. He started his education by studying the Qur'ān and other Islamic studies in his town. Then he migrated to Egypt where he joined the Aṣḥar Mosque. His Shaikh there was Shaikh Muḥammad 'Ulaish, Shaikh of Islam at that time in Egypt. (Shaikh al-Islam was a title given by the Turkish rulers to prominent religious men in countries belonging to the Turkish Empire).

While in Egypt some troubles occurred in the family. His father died when he was a child, and, being the eldest in the family, his relatives sent for him to return. On his leave Shaikh 'Ulaish gave him written permission to teach in the Sudan without undertaking any examinations, in case he might not come back.<sup>3</sup>

While he was in the Sudan the Mahdi revolution started. The develop-

1. J.M. Abun Nasr, The Tijāniyya, p.104.

2. Muḥammad al-Ḥafiz at-Tijānī, 'Tariq al-Haqq', p.25. (first edition, 1961).

3. Tariq al-Haqq, editor Muḥammad al-Ḥafiz at-Tijānī, 9th edition 1969, p.20.

ment of the situation made him decide not to leave again for Egypt to finish his studies. He stayed in al-Obayid spending most of his time reading Islamic books. He was appointed a judge by al-Mahdi. After al-Mahdi's death in 1885 he resigned.<sup>1</sup>

His initiation into the Tijāniyyah was by Shaikh Muhammad Wad az-Zakī the follower of Muhammad Wad Dulīb. Muhammad al-Badawī became an active Tijānī Shaikh and initiated many people. He was appointed Shaikh of the 'Ulamā of the Sudan by the government. He was also appointed Shaikh of Islam by the Turkish ruler of Egypt, 'Abbās Pasha. He occupied this post until his death in 1912 and he was succeeded by another Tijānī known as Abu'l Qāsim Ahmad Hashim who established the first religious college 'al ma'had al-'Ilmī' in Umm Durman city. Muhammad al-Badawī's tomb in Umm Durman is still visited and considered a place of barakah.

In spite of the considerable number of famous Tijāniyyah Shaikhs in the Sudan, none of them formed a tā'ifah in his own name as was the case with the other orders. They even had no common leader.<sup>2</sup> Their activity was largely connected with Tijāniyyah followers in other Islamic countries like West Africa, Egypt and Hijāz. An annual meeting for representatives of followers in these countries used to be held in the Hijāz during pilgrimage time. During the colonial period the Tijānīs in the Sudan were advised by their followers in Egypt and Arabia to slow down their activities. Outside contact was limited to correspondence, individual meetings or during the pilgrimage. The man who used to link the Tijānīs in the Sudan with their colleagues abroad was a West African known as

1. Tariq al-Haqq, editor Muhammad al-Hāfiz at-Tijānī, 9th edition 1969, p.21.

2. 'Abd al-Qādir Mahmūd: at-Tawāif as-Sūfiyya fī Sūdān.

Alfa Hashim a nephew of Hājj 'Umer al-Fūtī (Alfa died 1930-1).<sup>1</sup>

When the French took Senegal, Alfa Hashim took refuge in Medina. There he claimed to be head of the Tijāniyyah. He undertook the responsibility of arranging the meetings for Tijānīs in the Hijāz and getting in contact with them in their countries.<sup>2</sup>

After the end of colonization, the Tijānīs in the Sudan resumed their normal relations with the followers abroad. This is clear from the visits made by Tijānī leaders like Sidi Ibn 'Umer a grandson of Ahmad at-Tijānī, the founder, who visited the Sudan (Ibn 'Umer d. 1968).<sup>3</sup> Another Tijānī Shaikh who frequently visits the Sudan is the contemporary Tijānī advocate Muhammad al-Hāfiz at-Tijānī editor of *Tarīq al-Haqq*. He lives in Cairo where he established this religious magazine in 1951. *Tarīq al-Haqq* is concerned with preaching the Tijāniyyah doctrine and beliefs. It also covers all the activities of Tijāniyyah followers in the Islamic world, including the Sudan.

#### THE IDRISIYYAH

This order was founded by Ahmad Ibn Idrīs (1760-1837) who was born at Maisur near Fez. He was first initiated into the Khadiriyyah order by 'Abd al-Wahhāb at-Tāzī. Ibn Idrīs rejected the saint-veneration movement which dominated the Maghrib. He left the Maghrib for Egypt and from there to Mecca where he settled permanently. He became an eminent teacher

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1. *Tarīq al-Haqq*, editor Muhammad al-Hāfiz at-Tijānī, 9th edition, p.28.

2. J.M.Abun Nasr. *The Tijāniyya*, p.142.

3. *Tarīq al-Haqq*, 12th edition, p.31.

in Mecca and gathered around him a large number of followers.<sup>1</sup>

On his death the Khilāfah became a matter of dispute between two of his most devoted disciples, Muhammad Ibn 'Alī as-Sanūsī and Muhammad 'Uthmān al-Mirghani.

Muhammad 'Uthmān al-Mirghani was responsible for introducing the teachings of the Idrīsiyyah order in the Sudan in the form of a tā'ifah known as al-Mirghaniyyah. It is also known as al-Khatmiyyah because the founder considered it as the seal 'last' of the orders 'Khātimat at-Turuq'.

#### THE KHATMIYYAH

Muhammad 'Uthmān, the founder, was born in the year 1793 in the village of Salāmah in at-Tā'if. His family were considered 'Ashrāf' i.e. they descended from the Prophet 'peace be upon him', through his daughter Fātimah and her husband 'Alī Ibn Abū Tālib 'peace be upon them'.<sup>2</sup>

al-Mirghani was first initiated into the Naqshabandiyyah by Shaikh Ahmad Muhammad Banna; then into the Qādiriyyah by Sayyid al-Qādūmī, the muqaddam at Mecca; then into the Junaidiyyah by his father and finally into the Idrīsiyyah by Ahmad Ibn Idrīs. Al-Mirghani summarized all these tariqahs including al-Mirghaniyyah into the symbol 'NAQSHJIM' representing the initial of each tariqah.<sup>3</sup>

Al-Mirghani's first contact with the Sudan was when his master Ibn Idrīs sent him there to propagate the order. He arrived first in Dongola and from there he crossed the desert to Kurdufān. He said about his activities there:

1. J.S.Trimingham, 'The Sufi Orders in Islam, pp.114-116.

2. ar-Rasā'il al-Mirghaniyyah: Manāqib Ṣāhib ar-Rātib by Hasan Tāj al-Madani, p.114.

3. J.S.Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.234.

"I entered Kurdufān, and there I initiated many people. The secret of my tariqah has spread as far as Dar Fūr. In one year the number of my followers increased to hundreds. I appointed Khalīfahs by permission of the Prophet 'peace be upon him'. Among these Khalīfahs were al-Khatīb 'Arabī, Sālīh, Ibrāhīm, Balūlah and Ibn Abū Safiyyah".<sup>1</sup>

From Kurdufān al-Mirghani moved to Sennār the capital of the Funj state in 1817. It is reported from the Funj chronicle that the Funj rulers didn't accept al-Mirghani's preaching and subjected him to test by one of their brilliant 'Ulamā' called Ibrāhīm Wad Baqādī. It happened that this Shaikh died before meeting al-Mirghani and the latter left the country without any success.<sup>2</sup>

The same story is reported in ar-Rasā'il al-Mirghaniyyah, but it is said that al-Mirghani achieved a great success and reputation among both the people and their rulers. It is said that Shaikh Ibrāhīm Wad Baqādī envied al-Mirghani for his success, and decided to ask him difficult questions in order to disgrace him. Baqādī died before encountering al-Mirghani and his death was attributed to the 'karamah' of al-Mirghani.<sup>3</sup>

From Sennār al-Mirghani toured the North of the Sudan and then the East where he stayed for sometime in the town of Kasala. Then he left the Sudan for Abbysinia and from there to the Hijāz where he continued to serve his master Ahmad Ibn Idrīs.<sup>4</sup>

After Ahmad Ibn Idrīs' death (1837) al-Mirghani got into trouble with 'Alī as-Sanūsī, another active disciple of Ibn Idrīs. The dispute between

1. al-Hibāt al-Muqtabasah, by M.'U.al-Mirghani, p.22.

2. J.S.Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.232.

3. Hasan Taj al-Madani, Manāqib Sāhib ar-Rātib, p.116.

4. 'Abd al-Qādir Mahmūd, at-Tawā'if as-Sufiyya fī 'S-Sūdān, p.130.

them over the Khilāfah reached a deadlock and so each decided to carry on as an independent Shaikh advocating Ibn Idrīs' teachings.<sup>1</sup> Al-Mirghani established a central zāwiyah at Dair Khaizarān from which he continued to preach his tarīqah.

Al-Mirghani's visit to the Sudan was effective in laying the foundation for the Khatmiyyah tarīqah which was to be established successfully not by him, but by his son al-Hasan. Before his death in 1853 al-Mirghani sent his son al-Hasan to Sawākin, a Red Sea port in the Sudan. He succeeded in continuing with his father's earlier preaching among the Beja tribes in the East of the country. Like his father he travelled to Sennār, Kurdufan and Dongola.

He finally settled in Kasala where he founded the village of al-Khatmiyyah near the Tāka mountain. He made it the central zāwiyah in the Sudan. Al-Hasan died in al-Khatmiyyah in 1869.<sup>2</sup> His tomb is at Khatmiyyah and is considered a place of 'barakah'. Al-Hasan is regarded by the Mirghaniyyah followers as their leader and is more revered than his father the founder. He has 'bayāns'<sup>3</sup> throughout the Sudan.

The Khatmiyyah followers in Kasala province remain up to the present under the leadership of al-Hasan's grandsons. It is the only region in which the order remains as a tarīqah uniting its followers and apparently unconcerned with any other affairs. In the Khartoum area the leadership was under 'Alī al-Mirghani, a grandson of al-Hasan. 'Alī emerged influential both as a tarīqah Shaikh and a politician. He died in 1968 and was succeeded by his son Muḥammad 'Uthman who, like his father, is a Shaikh and a politician as well.<sup>4</sup>

1. J.S.Trimingham, The Sufi Orders in Islam, p.116.

2. J.S.Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.233.

3. Explanations of the term 'bayān' on p.105.

4. 'Abd al-Qādir Maḥmūd, at-Tawā'if as-Sūfiyya fī's-Sūdān, p.8.



In his Sufi teachings al-Mirghani, the founder, stressed that Sufism in general is based on the Qur'ān and the Sunna 'Traditions'. Sufism for him is a composite of Shari'ah, tariqah and haqiqah. One can't acquire a tariqah 'Path' without Shari'ah 'Prophets' traditions', and cannot acquire haqiqah 'truth' without the help of a tariqah. He used the simile of an egg to describe Sufism. He said: "Sufism is like an egg. One can't get the white part without removing the shell, and one can't get the yolk without removing the white part". So the murīd 'aspirant', should first learn Shari'ah because Shari'ah is the entrance and haqiqah is the house and one can't enter the house except through the door. Shari'ah is the stem, tariqah is the branch and haqiqah is the fruit.<sup>1</sup> The tariqah is a means to acquire the true knowledge of God.

The success of the tariqah depends on three factors. The first is that a murīd should have a gnostic Shaikh to guide him. The second is the observation of the tariqah's rules. The third is invocation 'dhikr'.<sup>2</sup>

The Khatmiyyah tā'ifah branched into another tā'ifah called al-Isma'iliyyah. This development did not occur in the usual way.<sup>3</sup> The founder Isma'il al-Walī Ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Kurdufānī (1793-1863) was granted permission from the founder of al-Khatmiyyah to form his own branch bearing his name. Isma'il started as a Shaikh teaching the Qur'ān in a Khalwah (not a retreat but also used by the Sudanese to refer to a classroom).

On the arrival of al-Mirghani, the founder from the Hijāz, into

1. Ahmad Ibn 'Abd ar-Rahmān ar-Rutabī, Minhāt al ashāb, p.96.

2. " " " p.70.

3. SEE Formation of tā'ifas, p.66.

Kurdufān, Ismā'il met him and became affiliated to his tariqah. Later on in 1842 he went on pilgrimage and came back with permission from al-Mirghani to form the Ismā'iliyyah tā'ifah.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the followers of this tā'ifah are in Kurdufān province in the West of the Sudan. Ismā'il was succeeded by his son al-Makkī, in 1863, who moved from al-Obayid town, their original centre, to Umm Durmān in support of al-Mahdi. After al-Mahdi's death he went back to al-Obayid where he died. Two of his sons continued the leadership of the tā'ifah. Muhammad Mirghani became the Khalīfah in Umm Durmān while his brother Ismā'il was the Khalīfah in al-Obayid. Two years later Ismā'il died leaving the administration of both the centres to his brother Muhammad Mirghani (d. 1950). Muhammad Mirghani was succeeded by his son Taj al-Asfiya (d. 1967). The most recent Khalīfah is his son al-Bakrī in Umm Durman.<sup>2</sup>

#### AL-SHĀDHILIYYAH

This tariqah was founded in the Maghrib by Abū al-Hasan 'Alī ash-Shādhilī. Ash-Shādhilī was first initiated into the Madyaniyyah by Ibn Harāzim a disciple of Abū Madyan. Then he migrated to Egypt where he joined the Rifā'iyyah under the Shaikhship of Abū'l Fath al-Wasitī. Then he went back to Fez where he met 'Abd as-Salām Ibn Mashīsh, a disciple of Abū Madyan, who ordered him to go into retreat 'Khalwah'. So he went to the village of Shādhilah, where he was born, for his 'Khalwah'. He met strong opposition from the Tunisian 'Ulamā, forcing him to migrate and

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1. J.S. Trimmingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.235.

2. 'Abd al-Qādir Mahmūd, at-Tawā'if as-Sufiyyah fī s-Sūdān, p.143.

settle permanently in Egypt where he died on his way back from pilgrimage.<sup>1</sup>

Ash-Shādhilī left no rules or rituals concerning his tariqah except certain litanies 'awrād'. The preservation of his tariqah is due to the efforts of his disciple in Egypt Abu al-'Abbās al-Mursī and al-Mursī's disciple Ibn 'Atā' Allāh who contributed to the survival of the tariqah by writing about and collecting the litanies of both ash-Shādhilī and al-Mursī.<sup>2</sup>

In Morocco the tariqah was propagated by the famous Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad Ibn Sulaimān al-Jazūlī author of *Dalā'il al-Khairāt* which was read by most of the early Sufis in the Sudan.

The Shādhiliyyah was probably introduced into the Sudan by Shaikh Hamad Abū Dunnāna al-Jazūlī's son-in-law. Abu Dunnāna migrated to the Sudan with his son as-Sayyid Ibn al-Hasan al-Baitī in 1445. They settled in al-Mahmiyya and preached the Shādhiliyyah teachings in their area.<sup>3</sup>

If this is true it means that the Shādhiliyyah was the first of the Sufi tariqahs to influence the Sudan.

From all the Shaikhs mentioned in the *Tabaqāt* of Ibn Dayf Allāh, only two Shaikhs were said to have adopted the Shādhiliyyah. One was Shaikh Khojalī Ibn 'Abd ar-Rahmān - who was mentioned previously in this study.<sup>4</sup>

Ibn Dayf Allāh said:

"As for the origin of his tariqah, the essence was Qādirī and in behaviour and awrād he was a Shādhilī; in fact his Shaikh was a disciple of Muhammad an-Nāsir ash-Shādhilī". Shaikh Khojalī had a very great

1. J.S.Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p.48.

2. " " " , p.49.

3. " " *Islam in the Sudan*, , p.223.

4. See Chap. 2.

reputation and numerous followers. Ibn Dayf Allāh mentioned about twenty-five Shaikhs who were initiated by Shaikh Khojalī.<sup>1</sup>

The Shaikhs in at-Tabaqāt were said to have read many Shādhilī books. References to Dalā'il al-Khairāt and Latā'if al-Minan are very frequent. This shows that although the Shādhiliyyah didn't become popular at this early stage as a tariqah, yet most of the Shaikhs had had access to it through the Shādhilī manuals.

The other Shaikh who became a Shādhilī was Shaikh Hamad Ibn Muhammad al-Majdhūb al-Kabīr (1693-1776), who was initiated into this tariqah by Shaikh 'Ali ad-Darāwī, a follower of Ahmad Ibn Nāsir ash-Shādhilī.<sup>2</sup>

Shaikh Hamad lived in the town of ad-Damar north of Khartoum which became a centre for religious education. The descendants of al-Majdhūb al-Kabīr preserved the establishment of their father and they became influential both in religious and political affairs.

When the Turks invaded the Sudan in 1820 the Ja'aliyyīn, assisted by al-Majdhūb's family, resisted and killed Ismā'il Pasha the Turkish leader. In reprisal the Turks devastated the Ja'aliyyīn district and ad-Damar was destroyed.<sup>3</sup>

Muhammad al-Majdhūb as-Saghīr, great grandson of al-Majdhūb al-Kabīr, fled to Sawākin and from there to Mecca. He returned to Sawākin in 1830 and established a centre there. After the political troubles had ended he returned to ad-Damar and died there in 1832. In Sawākin he was succeeded by his nephew Shaikh at-Tāhir al-Majdhūb. The centre in

1. Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allāh, p.193.

2. " " " " , p.188.

3. J.S.Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.225.

Sawākin operated successfully and the Majdhūb's family acquired a considerable number of followers.<sup>1</sup>

The family also reconstructed ad-Damar town and their Sufi centres. Ad-Damar is still preserved and considered as one of the biggest centres in the Sudan for teaching the Qur'ān. The tombs of the founders in ad-Damar are still visited by many people. Al-Majādhīb, as they are generally known, are now considered a Sufi tā'ifah. They are influential in ad-Damar district and among the Beja tribes of the East.

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1. 'Abd al-Qādir Mahmūd, at-Tawā'if as-Sūfiyah fī's-Sūdān, p.86.

## THE ORGANISATION OF THE SUFI TĀ'IFAS IN THE SUDAN

The Sufi tā'ifahs in the Sudan followed the same system as the mother-orders. This system consists of the Shaikh, the officials who help him, the followers and the centre.

### 1. THE SHAIKH

The Shaikh is the focus of the tariqah. He is considered as the one who has traversed the stages of the Sufi Path and pierced the veil of illusion, either through the help of a gnostic or by divine illumination. So he is in a position to guide others in the Path.

From the Khatmiyyah point of view he is a Shaikh 'mutahaqqiq' i.e. a gnostic "upon whom one should depend in both his religious and secular affairs. He is the master of guidance and a 'madad' 'supernatural help'. He is absorbed in the love of Allah. If he orders it is by Allah, if he helps it is from Allah, if he tells it is about Allah and if he preaches it is for Allah. He is a walī 'Protégé' of Allah".<sup>1</sup>

Al-Mirghani divided Shaikhship into three types.<sup>2</sup> The first is that of the above-described Shaikh. He called it the Shaikhship granted by Allah and the Prophet, 'peace be upon him', to those who deserve it.

The second type is the Shaikhship of Awliyā', described as the 'Shaikhship of tabarruk' i.e. acquired by an aspirant who, owing to his

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1. Muhammad 'Uthmān al-Mirghani, az-Zuhūr al-Fā'iqah, pp.55-6.

2. " " " " " " " " , pp.55-9.

fear of Allah 'taqwā' has acquired some *faid* 'emanation' through his Shaikh. The Shaikh in this category is granted permission by the Walī to initiate other followers. This permission is known as 'ijāzah' licence. The authority of the Shaikh of this type is limited by a set of strict rules. These rules are:

- a - He should attempt to follow the example of his Shaikh 'the master' in being strict and serious.
- b - He should always remind his followers that he has no 'madad' supernatural help, and that the 'madad' he acquired is that of his Shaikh.
- c - He should remind them that he is veiled like them 'mahjūb' and that they shouldn't consider him as a gnostic.
- d - He shouldn't accept being called Shaikh; but 'Khalīfah', 'nā'ib' or 'naqīb' i.e. deputy.

The third type of Shaikhship is the Shaikhship of teaching 'mashākhāt al-qirā'ah. This includes the Shaikhs who teach the Qur'ān to the pupils in the centre. A Shaikh of this type has nothing to do with 'Kutub al-Qawm' or books of the Sufis. He should concern himself only with teaching the Qur'ān and instructing his pupils to be guided by it.

Shaikh at-Tayyib Ibn al-Bashīr founder of the Sammāniyyah tā'ifah described the Shaikh in the following words: "The perfect Shaikh is the one who has acquired the transmutation of his self 'fānī 'an nafsīhi' and abides in Allah 'baqī bi-rabbihi'. He is the one who unveils for the aspirant not the reality of the creation 'al-Āthār' but the reality of the Creator 'al-Mu'aththir'".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ahmed at-Tayyib Ibn al-Bashīr, Kitāb al-Hikam, pp.161-162.

The Shaikh is regarded as the medium 'Wāsītah' by which the aspirant attains perfect knowledge of Allah. So it is essential for the aspirant to have a Shaikh, "He who has no Shaikh, his Shaikh will be the Devil".<sup>1</sup> So the Shaikh's function is to initiate and accompany the aspirant along the Sufi Path.

As a master and a supreme authority in the tariqah he is venerated. Certain rules clarify the relation between the Shaikh and his followers. The murid should believe in the Shaikh's mediumship. As a result he should :-

- a - Venerate and respect his Shaikh.
- b - Believe whatever his Shaikh tells him and must not argue with him for "He who says to his Shaikh 'Why?' will not succeed".<sup>2</sup>
- c - He should submit to his Shaikh 'like a corpse in the hands of the washer'.<sup>3</sup>
- d - He should always imagine the presence of his Shaikh in his heart and mind, and consider everything that happens to him as a 'madad' supernatural help, and 'faid' illumination from his Shaikh.
- e - He should be absorbed in his Shaikh 'fānī bi'sh-shaikh' to the extent that he feels his shaikh's goal as his own.<sup>4</sup>

The status of the Shaikh as a medium together with these rules led to the development of the Shaikh into a holy person. In addition to mediumship he became a source of spiritual power 'barakah', and also a performer of 'karamah' grace. At this stage not only the followers but

1. al-Mirghani, al-Hibāt al-Muqtabasah, p.25.

2. Ahmed at-Tayyib al-Bashir, Kitāb al-Hikam, p.161.

3. al-Mirghani, al Fath al-Mabrūk, p.45.

4. al-Mirghani, al-Hibāt al-Muqtabasah, p.27.



also those who are not affiliated to the *ṭarīqah* may develop a tendency to believe in the sanctity of the Shaikh influenced mostly by what is said by his followers. This also accounts for the change in the static function of the Shaikh as a medium linking the worshipper with Allah, to a transitional function. The Shaikh is thought to be unveiled because he is a protégé of Allah, so the people believe in his ability to adapt himself to all the circumstances. He can interfere in both the religious and secular affairs.

These beliefs about the Shaikh were rooted deeply in the Sudanese mind since the very beginning of the spread of Sufism in the Sudan. The biographies of the Shaikhs in the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Dayf Allāh give a penetrating insight into the Sudanese mentality at this immature stage of Sufism. They reveal clearly the nature of the Shaikh as the people considered it to be.

The description of most of the Shaikhs reveals at once the saintly status which developed around them. For example Shaikh Idrīs Ibn al-Arbāb is described in evocative images as "The Shaikh, the Imām 'leader', the Hujjah 'proof' of Sufis, Director of Travellers 'sālikīn', Saviour of the lost, Qutb 'axis' of the gnostics, Flag of the directed, the Illuminator of the sun of knowledge after its setting and the Medium of Allāh. Regarding the sciences of knowledge and mysteries, he is the Qutb of their darkness and the sun of their morning. He knows the paths of Heaven better than the paths of Earth. He always talks about the Great Name, the Angels and the Awliyā".<sup>1</sup>

Shaikh 'Abd al-Mājid Ibn Ḥamad al-Aghbash was "one of the masters of esoteric sciences so that he could tell men the secrets of their hearts and

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1. *Ṭabaqāt* Ibn Dayf Allāh, p.49.

minds".<sup>1</sup> Shaikh Idrīs divided the saints into three degrees, high, medium and lower. "The high is the degree of 'Qutbāniyyah'. The medium is the degree of 'Kawniyyah' creative power which means that the saint says to a thing 'Be' and it is. The lower is that the saint can fly in the air, walk on the water and tells of the unknown".<sup>2</sup> Many Shaikhs in at-Tabaqāt demonstrated these degrees. Some of them seemed to acquire all three of them simultaneously like Shaikh Hasan Wad Hassuna.<sup>3</sup>

In performing miracles 'Karamāt' often known as 'kharq al-ādah' i.e. breaking the natural order of things, most of the Shaikhs were the same. At-Tabaqāt is full of a variety of miracles, ranging from healing the sick and flying into the air, to restoring the dead to life and unveiling the unknown.

After his death the Shaikh's barakah is considered to continue. The task of mediumship which should have stopped after the Shaikh's death, may manifest itself in certain cases. For example Shaikh Badawī Wad Abū Dilaiq was initiated, in a vision, by Shaikh Idrīs Ibn al-Arbāb after his death.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that a Shaikh is dead makes no difference to his performance of 'karamah'. The range of this performance may become even wider. Al-Mirghani was asked by one of his followers about what was going to become of them when he died. He answered: "a gnostic cannot be veiled by a heap of dust".<sup>5</sup> The author said that al-Mirghani's

1. Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allāh, p.279.

2. " " " " , p.206.

3. " " " " , p.133.

4. See p. 68.

5. Hasan Tāj al-Madani: Manāqib sāhib ar-rātib, p.118.

explanation for his saying was that if one visits his tomb his problem will be solved and his supplication answered.

The effect of the Shaikh's barakah is achieved by performing a ziyārah 'visitation' to his tomb. This might be the reason why the Shaikh's tombs, not only in the Sudan, are distinguished by their different shapes and styles from other tombs.

In the Sudan there are three types of buildings. The 'Qubbah' which is a squared or circular room with a dome-shaped building over it, the 'baniyyah' which is just a squared flat-roofed building, and the third is 'bayān' which is sometimes a small squared wall without a roof. The 'bayān' - marking - is not the original burial place of the Shaikh. They are built to mark places in which a Shaikh was seen visiting, in a dream in most cases. The person who has the vision should go to the place and mark it either by four walls, or a heap of stones with a stick and a flag. Bayān serves as a place of barakah like the original tomb.

## 2. THE OFFICIALS IN THE TĀ'IFAH

Under the Shaikh are a number of officials appointed by him as assistants in the administration of the tariqah's affairs. Their task is often concerned with ritual and organization. The position is granted only by the Shaikh. He offers each official a licence 'ijāzah' stating what he is authorized to undertake in the region allotted to him.<sup>1</sup>

The common officials who are found in nearly all the tā'ifahs in the Sudan are Khalīfah 'deputy' and Muqaddam 'sectional leader.' The Khatmiyyah has its own system consisting of six officials.<sup>2</sup> These

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1. J.S. Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p.147.

2. al-Mirghani, *Minwāl at-Tariqat at-Tāhirah*, p.108.

officials are :-

- 1 - 'Khalīfat al-Khulafā' - deputy of deputies. He supervises all the Khalīfahs' duties and gives them advice. He has the right to expel any Khalīfah who disobeys him. He has an assistant 'nā'ib' to represent him if he is absent.
- 2 - 'The Umanā' - trustees (sing. Amīn). The Amīn is responsible for supervising all the officials including Khalīfat al-Khulafā, in religious matters. He should see that they perform their prayers, recite the litanies and behave according to the teachings of the tariqah. The Amīn has no right to interfere in any affairs other than religious ones.
- 3 - 'Naqīb' : He takes care of the arrangements for the daily prayers and the dhikr. He should always accompany Khalīfat al-Khulafā' and act as his messenger.
- 4 - 'Muqaddam' whose duty is to look after visitors who arrive in the centre. He makes the arrangements for their accommodation and food.
- 5 - Servant of the Mosque : His duty is to clean the Mosque and keep it tidy.
- 6 - 'Hukkām' (sing. hākīm) : he is responsible for the general affairs of the area or the village where the centre is. He is consulted in marriages, disputes and any sort of injustice suffered by any member of the community.

In the Tijāniyyah there are two offices. The Khalīfah who is a medium between the followers and the Shaikh, "He teaches the followers what the Shaikh prescribes about knowledge, secrets, and litanies".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Muhammad Ibn 'Abd Allah at-Tasfāwī, al-Wird ar-Rabbānī, p.31.

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The second official is the muqaddam whose job is different from the muqaddam in the Khatmiyyah. In the Tijāniyyah he is a 'mulaqqin' instructor who instructs both in compulsory and optional litanies. He is supervised by the Khalīfah but should be respected by all in the same way as the Khalīfah. There are certain conditions concerning those granted the office of muqaddam. A muqaddam should not teach the 'wird' except to those who would be careful in reciting it regularly. He should not reinstruct those who have left the tariqah. He should set a good example for his fellows in every mode of behaviour.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of any tā'ifah consists of two categories, the aspirants, 'murīdīn' and the second category are the general followers 'atbā'.

#### A The Aspirants

These are sometimes known in the Sudan as the 'fuqarā' 'poor in need of Allah'. They are the individuals who intend to be initiated into the tariqah and pass through its different stages in order to attain to complete knowledge of Allah. They are also called by al-Mirghani "Ikhwān as-Sulūk,"<sup>1</sup> brothers traversing the sufi path. They usually form a smaller number than the followers. Two important elements are connected with this group.

The first is the initiation ceremony. The murīd should take a compact which involves an oath of allegiance in which he swears total submission and an absolute obligation of obedience to his Shaikh.

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1. al-Mirghani, al-Hibāt al-Muqtabasah, p.36.

In the Qādiriyyah as-Sammanīyyah there are three stages of initiation.

The first is 'Akhd at-Tarīqah - taking the Path, by means of 'musāfahah or 'Akhd al-Yad' - taking of the hand. The murīd should perform the ablution 'wudū' and say two 'Rak'ahs' reading 'al-Fātihah' once and 'al-Ikhlās' seven times. Then he sits in front of his Shaikh. The Shaikh takes the murīd's hand and reads the following which the murīd should repeat after him.

a - basmalah 'in the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful' (once).

b - al-Istighfār : 'forgiveness asking' : (seven times).

c - "I believe in God, his angels, his messengers, and the day of judgement, destiny with its good and evil and resurrection after death" (once).

d - "I have become a Moslem and renewed my Islam, I repent of all my sins and abjure infidelity. There is no god but God, Muhammad is his Messenger. I take the tarīqah, and promise Allah, at the hands of Shaikh (X), to abide by the Sharī'ah and the tarīqah". Then the Shaikh teaches him the 'rātib' of the tarīqah.

The second stage is 'Akhd al-'Ahd' taking the compact. Both the murīd and his Shaikh should perform the ablution. They sit facing the 'Qiblah'. The Shaikh asks the murīd to repent and say two 'rak'ahs'. Then he asks the murīd to sit closely in front of him and takes the fourth finger of his hand in his. Then he asks him to repeat the following after him. "I accept Allah as my God, Islam my religion, Muhammad 'peace be upon him' as a Prophet and a Messenger, The Qur'ān as my guide 'dalīl', the K'abah as my direction and Shaikh (X) as my Shaikh and guide to Allah and his Messenger". Then he says : "I accept this tarīqah, al-Qādiriyyah, as-Sammanīyyah, al-Junaidiyyah, al-'Alawiyyah, al-Muhammadiyyah, al-Jabreiliyyah al-Ilāhiyyah". Then the Shaikh releases the murīd's

finger and the murīd kisses his Shaikh's hand".<sup>1</sup>

The third stage is talqīn adh-dhikr, i.e. the murīd is given the litanies of the tariqah. It takes the same steps as in 'Akhd al-'Ahd'. When the Shaikh finishes dictating 'Akhd al-'Ahd' he asks the murīd to close his eyes and open "the eyes of his heart", and concentrate on the meaning of the litanies he dictates to him.<sup>2</sup>

In the Khatmiyyah tā'ifah the initiation ceremony takes a single but complicated form. The murīd should wash all his body. Near the place where he has washed himself, he should repent and say two 'rak'ahs'. Then he says 'al-Istighfār' seventy times. Then 'as-Salāt 'alā an-Nabī' prayers upon the Prophet, peace be upon him, a hundred times, then 'there is no god but God' seventy thousand times.

Then the murīd washes again and repeats the same rituals in the same order. Then he reads 'Sūrat al-Ikhlās' a hundred thousand times.

Then he washes for the third time and sits in front of the Shaikh. He says the Basmalah four thousand times. Then the Shaikh dictates to him the 'wird' of the tariqah.<sup>3</sup>

The second element concerning the aspirants is the rules which should be strictly observed by them. These rules regulate the obligations of the aspirant towards his Shaikh, himself and towards the other members of the tariqah. Nearly all the tā'ifahs contain these three types of rules. For example these are the rules of the Khatmiyyah tā'ifah:-

1. 'Abd al-Mahmūd Nūr ad-Da'im, Azāhir ar-Riyād, p.96.

2. " " " " " " , p.96.

3. Ahmad Ibn 'Abd ar-Rahmān ar-Rutabī, Minhāt al-Ashāb, p.89.

As regards his obligations towards his Shaikh the aspirant should accord absolute obedience, reverence and submission to him. He should manifest exclusive commitment to his Shaikh and the tariqah by avoiding contact with other Shaikhs without the permission of his Shaikh.

As regards himself, he should endeavour to bring himself up within the scope of the religious teachings and instructions conveyed in the Qur'an and Sunna; for both the Qur'an and Sunna are the sources of Sufism.

As regards his obligations towards his brothers in the tariqah, the aspirant should willingly co-operate with and help his fellows. He should be loving, merciful, considerate and respectful.

The rules in other ta'ifas differ only in the details of the instruction. The stress is laid upon each rule very strongly and each is considered as effective in the success of the aspirant as a seeker of knowledge 'salik'.

#### B. THE GENERAL FOLLOWERS 'ATBĀ' :-

Among the general followers are the 'Hairān'. These are the people who are considered as associates of the tariqah. They voluntarily serve the Shaikh and his centre. They are not initiated into the tariqah but they share in the collective prayers and dhikr. Some of them may stay permanently in the centre if lodging is provided for families. Women also may become 'huwārāt'. Hairān are allowed to carry on with their ordinary life. They are respected by the people because they are in the service of the Shaikh. They may even be thought to acquire some barakah in return for their service. After the Shaikh's death the hairān continue to work with the Khalīfah.

Needy people may also form a proportion of the general followers.



Sufi centres, particularly the large and famous ones, attract poor people because of the generosity and protection they offer. Some of them may stay permanently if they have nowhere else to go. Some may visit the centre from time to time asking for help. Gifts brought to the Shaikh in the form of money, clothing or food make a rich source for providing for these people.

The pupils 'talabah', though too young to understand the nature of the centre and the tariqah may still be considered as part of the followers. They are subject to the authority of the Shaikh which is passed to them through 'Shaikh al-qirā'ah' who teaches them the Qur'ān. These boys are sent by their parents to learn the Qur'ān at the centre. Those coming from a distance stay permanently in the lodging provided for them. They live free of charge and their parents' contribution is only the gifts they bring to the Shaikh when they perform 'ziyārah'.

This group of general followers does not understand the exact nature of the activity of the Shaikh and the centre as a whole. For them the Shaikh is a 'feki'. Feki (faqīh) is a word of various implications to the ordinary Sudanese. It doesn't strictly mean a person who is an expert in the Qur'ān and Shari'ah. It means a very religious man in the sense that he acquires mystic powers, which help him to perform miracles. This conception led to the belief that if one speaks badly of the feki his curse will reach one even if the feki hasn't heard. If one's problem is not solved after a visit to the Shaikh, it is not the Shaikh's fault. It is due to the weakness of the person's belief in the Shaikh. All these beliefs originate among this group of followers. It is among them also that the exaggerated stories about the Shaikh's miracles develop.

The only useful function performed by this group of followers, with the exception of the 'hairān', is that they join in the collective dhikr and form the circle 'halaqah'.

#### 4. THE CENTRE

The centre is the place of residence of the Shaikh and his followers. Various names were applied to these centres, 'ribāt', originally an Arabic word, was a training centre, 'Khanāqah', Persian, was a non-training hostel, 'Zāwiyah' was a name for smaller establishments where one Shaikh and his pupils lived and 'Khalwah' is the retreat of a single Shaikh.<sup>1</sup>

In the Sudan the terms 'Khanāqah' and 'ribāt' were not used. The terms 'Khalwah' and 'zāwiyah' were used to denote different things from those mentioned.

The first application of the word 'Khalwah' is for a retreat, which is the original meaning of the word in Sufism. Many Shaikhs in at-Tabaqāt went into a 'Khalwah' for worshipping in seclusion. For example Shaikh Hamad Ibn al-Turābī after spending a night with Shaikh Dafa'Allāh, his master, went into a Khalwah 'retreat' for one year and eight months. He closed the door of the 'Khalwah' which means a room as well - by building a wall in front of it leaving a small hole for taking food and water from his followers.<sup>2</sup>

Another usage of 'Khalwah' is for class-rooms for teaching the Qur'ān whether in a Sufi centre or a town. It also refers to rooms used as hostels for Qur'ān students or visitors. So the word 'Khalwah' covers all these activities and it is not used to refer to the Sufi centre as a whole.

The word 'Zāwiyah' also is not used in its original meaning. It is used to refer to a building, in most cases one room, built not necessarily by a tariqah Shaikh, but also by any religious man near his residence.

1. J.S.Trimingham, The Sufi Orders in Islam, pp.17-18.

2. Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allāh, p.162.

It is used for collective prayers during the week except Friday prayer which should be performed in the mosque. It is also used as a hostel for travellers passing through a town or village who intend to stay for some time. All the needs of the guests are provided by the owner of the 'zāwiyah'.

The Sufi centre in the Sudan is identified by the name of the Shaikh, which covers the whole area, which in most cases is a village. Many villages in the Sudan started as Sufi centres. The development of this centre into a village is largely caused by the readiness of the tariqah to accept associate members who form the group of the general followers 'Atbā'. In most cases some of the poor people who depend for their living upon the centre, may decide to stay permanently. So they are given small plots of land near the centre and houses may be built at the expense of the Shaikh. Examples of these villages are Wad at-Turābī after Shaikh Hamad Wad at-Turābī, Maseed Wad 'Isā after Shaikh 'Isā al-Ansārī and Wad-Madani after Shaikh Muhammad Wad Madani. Some of the villages may not bear the name of the Shaikh, but the Shaikh may give it a name. For example an-Nikhaira, the village in which is the centre of Feki 'Uthmān Ibn al-feki 'Umar. I visited this village fourteen years ago and there was nothing except the centre which constituted the mosque, 'khalwahs' and 'zāwiyahs' and the Shaikh's house. There were about seven or eight separate houses which were a permanent settlement for some of the followers. Four years ago I found that this small settlement had become enlarged and had developed into a village.

The first Shaikhs of the Sudan contributed to the establishment of villages and the settlement of many people who used to move from one place to another. Those Shaikhs were respected by the authorities of their time because their effect in controlling the people was realized.

As mentioned earlier they were freed from taxes and were given plots of land to build their centres on. This was why they were able to establish permanent settlements for the people around their centres, and so villages founded by this process came to be distinguished as Sufi centres.

Even at an earlier stage the centres were self-sufficient. The centre depended mostly on the gifts 'ziyārah' brought by visitors. A typical example is the centre of Wad-Hassuna.<sup>1</sup> Some centres might have some land for cultivation to provide for their living.

#### RITUAL : THE DHIKR

The ritual of a tariqah is a rule the following of which enables the aspirant to attain spiritual purity, which in turn, enables him to achieve knowledge of God. This ritual is summed up in the dhikr which the Sufis have based on Qur'ānic injunction.<sup>2</sup>

The dhikr or 'remembrance of God' forms the central ritual of the tariqah. It is said that, "Courtesy 'ādāb' and dhikr 'remembrance' constitute the warp and the woof out of which the tariqah is woven."<sup>3</sup>

Dhikr is a means for worship. In many verses in the Qur'ān is reflected the importance and necessity for dhikr. Sufism associated with dhikr the need for spiritual concentration. This concentration could be achieved by the control of the will, thought and the heart. It has been

1. Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allah, p.138.

2. J.S.Trimingham, The Sufi Orders in Islam, p.194.

3. Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Rutabī, Minhāt al-Ashāb, p.86.

mentioned how in the initiation ceremony of as-Sammāniyyah ṭā'ifah the aspirant is asked to close his eyes and open the eyes of his heart in order to concentrate on the meaning of the dhikr he is taught.

The first method for achieving this concentration in performing dhikr was the 'samā'. It is not known what the 'samā' consists of.<sup>1</sup> Al-Mirghani said that: "samā' is like lightening, it appears and disappears and it is real." He quoted Abū Madyan's saying "samā' is a jewel, discovered only by the favourites 'al-fudalā' ". Al-Mirghani continued: "samā' is a secret 'sirr' from Allah's secrets, that passes into the various parts of the body and results in 'tawajjud' ecstasy. If it touches the hands the murīd claps, if the feet, the murīd dances, if the heart, he mourns, if the soul he screams and if it touches the depth of the heart the murīd faints. Samā' is prohibited 'ḥaram' for those who are not qualified for it. Its qualifications are self-mortification 'mujāhadah' and the achievement of the Sufi stages 'maqāmāt'.<sup>2</sup>

Dhikr is also accompanied by musical instruments 'drums' in order to produce the effect of distracting the senses from anything other than spiritual concentration.

The ṭā'ifahs in the Sudan perform three types of dhikr. The first is dhikr al-awqāt which is a daily dhikr performed after the five prayers. It consists of certain 'rawatib' prescribed by the Shaikh to his followers. This was the popular form of dhikr in use in the early stage of Sufism in the Sudan. The Shaikhs used to instruct their followers to perform 'dhikr and rawatib' after each prayer.<sup>3</sup> Another form of dhikr at that

1. J.S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p.195.

2. Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Rutabī, *Minhat al-Ashāb*, pp.91-92.

3. *Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allāh*, p.196.

time was the reading of the Sufi manuals, like *Dalā'il al-Khairāt* and *Lata'if al-Minan*. This was referred to as 'majlis al-dhikr' gathering for recollection.<sup>1</sup>

The second type is 'al-dhikr al-khafī', silent dhikr. It is also described as 'dhikr galbī' i.e. of the heart, as opposed to the 'dhikr lisānī' i.e. of the tongue. This type of dhikr is performed by the murīd according to the instructions of his Shaikh. The 'dhikr khafī' is said to be a special characteristic of the Naqshabandiyyah order and here is a detailed description of how it is performed.

The main element in this dhikr is the rhythm of breathing: exhalation and inhalation. The murīd should be careful that whenever he respires his breath should be dedicated to the remembrance of Allah. Certain centres are allotted to this type of dhikr. These are known as the heart 'al-qalb', the spirit 'al-rūh', the secret 'al-sirr', the invisible 'al-khafī' and the super-invisible 'al-akhfā'.<sup>2</sup>

From the description given about the situation of these centres it is clear that they are situated in the breast. The heart and the secret are situated on the left side of the breast, while the spirit and the invisible are situated on the right side. The super-invisible is situated in the middle of the breast between the other four centres. These five centres are part of the soul 'nafs' which is situated in the brain referred to as 'al-dimāgh'.

The dhikr which is performed by the breath passes from one centre to the other in the exact order in which they are given, starting with the heart and ending with the super-invisible.

1. *Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allāh*, p.82.

2. 'Abd al-Mahmūd Nūr al-Dā'im, *Azāhir al-Riyād*, p.78.

A description is given of how the dhikr by the heart is performed. Here another element is introduced and that is imagination 'khayāl'. The tongue is put against the roof of the mouth, the teeth closed together while the respiration is performed as usual.

In this situation the murīd should imagine the presence of Allāh in his heart continuously, while repeating 'Allāh' with his breath. If he finds it necessary to talk to someone he may talk while being very careful that this imagination should continue unhindered. The importance of the continuity of the imagination is that it helps in the continuity of the dhikr, and as a result this dhikr is strongly established in the heart. The establishment of the dhikr in the heart directly abolishes any other entity. This is because "the reality of dhikr is the forgetfulness of any other entity."<sup>1</sup>

Once the dhikr is established in the heart then the same process is experienced with the remaining four centres. After the dhikr dominates these five centres, it will eventually dominate the soul 'nafs', because these five centres are part of it. As a result the murīd will be completely involved in dhikr.

When this stage is complete dhikr is changed from 'Allāh' to 'La ilāha illā'llāh' there is no god but God. The previous procedure is followed with each of the five centres.

In this stage the murīd should bear in mind that the meaning of 'There is no god but God' is 'nothing is intended but Allāh', 'lā maqsūd illā'llāh'. This dhikr is performed twenty one times. The result achieved may be unconsciousness 'zuhūl' and exhaustion 'istihlāk'.

1. 'Abd al-Mahmūd Nūr al-Dā'im, Azāhir al-Riyād, p.80.

At this point the murīd should concentrate on the name 'Allah' and never forget or cease concentration. This is called 'murāqābah' awareness, which will result in the first step towards fanā' 'passing away'. Then the dhikr through the breath is stopped and the murīd can start using his tongue repeating 'There is no god but God' five thousand times. This leads to complete absorption 'fanā' '.

Collective dhikr is also performed at certain events celebrated by the tā'ifahs. These include the celebration of the Prophet's birthday, al-Isrā' wa'l-Mi'rāj 'the Prophet's nocturnal journey' and the hawliyyah which is the anniversary of a saint's death.

All the tā'ifahs perform this collective dhikr in the above mentioned manner, except the Tijāniyyah followers. The Tijānīs at first used to chant the dhikr and perform bodily movements at the end of it. But this was banned in 1919 by Moḥammad al-Ḥabīb, great-grandson of Aḥmad at-Tijānī, in a document agreed upon by many members of the family and prominent Tijāniyyah Shaikhs. The Tijānīs were required to read dhikr plainly, sitting and without forming a circle 'halaqah'.<sup>1</sup>

In the Khatmiyyah for example the murīd is instructed to perform each dhikr formula a hundred times. Fifty of these are by the tongue, and the other fifty are by the heart symbolizing the Naqshabandiyyah order.<sup>2</sup>

The third type is the collective dhikr. This is performed by the Shaikh, the aspirants and the general followers. The collective dhikr is approved of by many tā'ifahs. The idea behind it is to attract those who live in a state of 'ghaflah' negligence i.e. those preoccupied with worldly affairs.

1. J.B.Ahun-Nasr, The Tijāniyyah, pp.54-55.

2. Aḥmad Ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ar-Ruṭabī, Minhāt al-Ashāb, p.89.



With this dhikr is connected the introduction of musical instruments. The playing of instruments should be in accordance with the utterance of the dhikr formula. In addition there is a certain rhythmical movement of the body mostly bending forward and backward. This dhikr is performed in a circle, 'halaqah'.

The whole procedure proved so attractive that men, women and young boys and girls who are not associates of the tā'ifah would join in the 'halaqah'.

Some of the participants may be so absorbed in the performance that they may perform peculiar movements. They are said to be in a state of attraction 'jadhb'.

## CHAPTER 4.

### SHAIKH AL-'UBAID WAD BADR

#### A Historical Background:-

Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Badr was born in 1810. His family was from the Mosallamiyyah tribe in the Northern region of the Sudan. This tribe was originally from the Hijaz.<sup>1</sup> His family traced their descent back to Abū Bakr as-Siddīq, the first Caliph after the Prophet, peace be upon him. Nothing was written about the early life of Shaikh Muhammad. All information about this period is based mostly on oral tradition collected by a recent affiliate to this Shaikh's tariqah.

It was said that Shaikh al-'Ubaid, for this was the name he was famous for, did not join a 'khalwah', the school for teaching the Qur'ān, when he was a young boy. This was because his parents wanted him to help them in their struggle for a livelihood. So he started working as a shepherd. The writer continued, "his work as a shepherd helped him in orientating himself towards the path of the Sufis. It encouraged him to meditate and seek knowledge through 'ilham' inspiration, having missed the chance of seeking it through 'talqīn' education."<sup>2</sup>

His first step in the Sufi path began with asceticism. He said: "At the beginning I compelled myself not to eat, drink or sleep for a whole year and I succeeded. After that I used to count my vertebrae

1. Bakhit al-Fadl, al-'Ubaid Wad Badr, July 1973, Unpublished.

2. " " " " "

one by one through my stomach."<sup>1</sup> He was said to be restless and never settled in one place.

In the year 1840 he went on Pilgrimage. On coming back he decided to settle in one place. His first permanent settlement was Umm Dubān, a village south of Khartoum, on the eastern bank of the Blue Nile. The reason he decided to settle was related to the fact that many people started to visit him and many of them stayed permanently with him. He built a mosque there and many 'Khalwahs' for teaching the Qur'ān.

Shaikh al-'Ubaid was said to be illiterate. This is confirmed by a story reported in Miftāḥ al-Basā'ir saying that one of his followers asked him about a problem in fiqh, Jurisprudence. He asked his follower to consult one of the 'ulamā', but the man insisted that the Shaikh should answer him. Shaikh al-'Ubeid told him, "How do you expect me to answer your question when I do not even know how to read and write?"<sup>2</sup>

In his majlis, study-gathering, he used to appoint one of the 'ulamā' to read from 'Kutub al-qawm', the Sufi books, and to explain it to the listeners. If any serious question faced them it was the Shaikh who undertook the task of explaining it. Such questions were always connected with 'ilm al-bāṭin' esoteric knowledge, which was the Shaikh's speciality.

The majlis used to start in the morning and continue until the noon 'zuhr' prayers. After that the Shaikh devoted the time for meeting his visitors, listening to their complaints and offering them any sort of help possible. This activity ended by the afternoon 'asr' prayers, after which the Shaikh started his task of inspecting the 'Khalwahs' and 'Zawiyahs' to see that the residents and guests were well looked after and

1. Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥājj Nūr, Miftāḥ al-Basā'ir, p.43.

2. Miftāḥ al-Basā'ir, p.24.

had no problems. Then followed the dusk 'maghrib' prayers after which the Shaikh was left alone to perform dhikr until the last prayer was performed. After that the Shaikh went into seclusion for private dhikr.<sup>1</sup>

Another form of activity at the Centre was in the 'Khalwah' for teaching the Qur'ān and 'ilm at-tawhīd. This was undertaken by the Shaikhs and the 'Ulamā'. The fire of the Qur'ān 'nar al-Qur'ān' for which this centre is famous was connected with this activity. During the day the students were allowed to go out for some time to collect wood for lighting the fire at night. The fire was lighted in one place around which the students gathered to recite the Qur'ān. The height of its ashes became the reason for its fame. Although the centre is now electrically lighted the fire is still supplied nightly with wood in order to preserve it as a symbol of the centre and its founder.

Details of the history of Shaikh al-'Ubaid are scant. Shaikh al-'Ubaid himself did not leave any written material. The only written information are two books called 'Sirāj as-Sālikīn' and 'Miftāh al-Baṣā'ir' which were published as one book in 1967. Sirāj as-Sālikīn was written by Ahmad Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jubail a disciple of Shaikh al-'Ubaid. It contains all the Shaikh's teachings, recorded by his disciple as he received them from the Shaikh.

Miftāh al-Baṣā'ir which forms the other half of the book was written by Shaikh Muḥammad Ibn al-Hājj Nūr who was also a student of Shaikh al-'Ubaid. Unlike the author of Sirāj as-Sālikīn who took the material of this book directly from his master, Shaikh Muḥammad Ibn al-Hājj Nūr depended on the information he collected from the followers of the Shaikh.

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1. Bakḥīt al-Fadl, al-'Ubaid Wad Badr, Unpublished.

Miftāh al-Baṣā'ir is divided into four sections. The first section is a collection of sayings of famous Sudanese Shaikhs predicting the coming of Shaikh al-'Ubaid and certifying his sainthood. It also contains accounts of the Shaikh's miracles. The second section is about the Shaikh's personal characteristics and behaviour. The third section is about certain problems about which the Shaikh was asked and his views regarding these problems. The fourth and last section contains some of the Shaikh's sayings.

The Shaikh's personality and behaviour emerge from the accounts given in Miftāh al-Baṣā'ir. The author's purpose in writing this book as he put it was to bring out the details and particulars of the Shaikh's behaviour and character. He said that the Shaikh's words and deeds are a guide to the right path which leads to God. So his book is intended as a guide and ideal for those following the right path.<sup>1</sup>

As was shown previously, the most stressed quality of the Shaikh was asceticism. The author reported that the Shaikh fasted for the whole year and followed a strict discipline in performing his religious practices. There is frequent reference to the Shaikh warning his followers against surrendering to worldly pleasures. He told them that they should not waste their effort in the pursuit of the vanities of life, because however hard they struggled they would gain nothing except that which God offers them.

Shaikh al-'Ubaid also used to get rid of anything that belonged to him. He never kept the presents brought to him either by the people or government officials. He used to employ two store-keepers, one responsible for the gifts coming from ordinary people and the other for those brought by

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1. Miftāh al-Baṣā'ir, Muḥammad Ibn al-Hājj Nūr, p.6.

government officials. Even in distributing these gifts he seemed to have followed a strict method. He used to give his followers from the people's gifts depending on the belief that the people's relation with him was purely on religious grounds. The officials brought gifts because they wanted to be friendly since they were aware of his influence over the people. So their gifts went to people other than his followers.<sup>1</sup>

Shaikh al-'Ubaid used to put all his property at the disposal of the needy. If anyone asked him for money he would give him all the money he had at the time. He told his followers that if one were destined to be rich, generosity would not make him poor; and that if he were destined to be poor, greed would not protect him.<sup>2</sup>

His modesty was apparent in the name he applied to himself. He called himself al-'Ubaid, the diminutive form of 'abd' slave. He also used to call himself 'ramād al-qana', the ashes of a certain type of wood. These ashes are so light that the slightest current of air disperses them.

Shaikh al-'Ubaid's attitude towards politics was largely governed by his religious attitudes. During his time the Sudan was under the rule of the Egyptian-Turkish rulers. Some of the officials in the administration were British. The social and economic situation was at its worst and the people were suffering from the injustices and the burden of taxes.<sup>3</sup> There are many stories in Miftāḥ al-Basā'ir showing Shaikh al-'Ubaid's courage in dealing with anything that was connected with the government. In many cases he used to tell them that he feared God only. He was feared and respected by them.

1. Miftāḥ al-Basā'ir, Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥājj Nūr, p.36.

2. " " " " " " , p.40.

3. Ḥassan Aḥmad Maḥmūd, Islam and Arabic Culture in Africa, p.400.

When al-Mahdī declared his holy wars in 1882, Shaikh al-'Ubaid sent his sons to announce their father's support for al-Mahdī. This was not because of his belief in al-Mahdī, but was due to his own belief that everything is controlled by the will of God. The author of Miftāh al-Basā'ir asked him about the reality of Mahdism and whether they should obey al-Mahdī. He said "This is God's will for the country; it is a test 'balā', and we must obey his orders for no one should act against the will of God.<sup>1</sup>"

Shaikh al-'Ubaid's support for al-Mahdī was not under-estimated by the administration for they knew his influence over the people. So an army was sent out to check al-'Ubaid's movement, but it was defeated. When al-Mahdī besieged Khartoum al-'Ubaid sent an army led by his sons as a reinforcement for al-Mahdi's army.

It was said that after the conquest of Khartoum in 1884 al-Mahdī sent for Shaikh al-'Ubaid to meet him in Khartoum for consultation. Al-'Ubaid unwillingly accepted the invitation and started his journey for Khartoum accompanied by some of his followers. It was also said that on his way he prayed not to reach Khartoum and he died on the way in 1302 A.H. (1884 A.D.)<sup>2</sup>. He was taken back to Umm Dubban where he was buried. This is now considered one of his famous miracles.

Shaikh al-'Ubaid was succeeded by his sons, Ahmed, Karrār, Hasab ar-Rasūl and Mustafā respectively. The Khilāfah is still a family monopoly. al-Khalīfah Mustafā was succeeded by the present al-Khalīfah Yūsuf Ibn al-Faqīh 'Umar a grandson of Shaikh al-'Ubaid.

1. Miftāh al-Basā'ir, p.50.

2. Bakhīt al-Fadl, al-'Ubaid Wad Badr, Unpublished.

Umm-Dubban is still one of the most active Sufi centres. Teaching the Qur'ān and theology is the main activity. The busiest time at the centre is during the 'Eids, al-Isrā' and the Birthday of the Prophet, peace be upon him. People from all over the country gather at the centre during these occasions. They stay for more than a week, mostly provided for at the expense of the centre.

The centre has been modernized for the convenience of visitors. Electricity and water taps have been installed. Al-Khalīfah Yūsuf has recently built a hospital and furnished it, together with houses for the staff. The hospital is the property of the centre but he handed it over to the government in order to supply the staff and equipment.

#### HIS TARĪQAH AND STYLE:-

Shaikh al-'Ubaid was a follower of the Qādiriyyah Shaikh 'Awād al-Jīd a disciple of Shaikh at-Tayyib Ibn al-Bashīr the founder of the Qādiriyyah as-Sammāniyyah. Shaikh al-'Ubaid told Shaikh 'Abd al-Mahmūd Nūr ad-Dā'im grandson of Shaikh at-Tayyib Ibn al-Bashīr, that "My Shaikh is Shaikh 'Awād al-Jīd, my inclination is towards Shaikh Hassan Wad Hassūna and my direction was by your grandfather Shaikh at-Tayyib". He also told him the story of how he was directed by Shaikh at-Tayyib although he was dead. He said "Shaikh Ibrāhīm ad-Dusūqī, son of Ahmad at-Tayyib Ibn al-Bashīr, arrived at our village. I visited him with my brother Shaikh Muhammad al-Muqāblī. We asked him about anything he heard from his father, Shaikh at-Tayyib, before his death. Shaikh Ibrāhīm told us that Shaikh at-Tayyib said that if anyone visited his tomb, he would direct him in the same way he had directed others during his lifetime. So we decided to visit Shaikh at-Tayyib's tomb. We entered his tomb at night and I asked my brother Muhammad to sit at the feet of Shaikh at-Tayyib.



I went and stayed in the 'khalwah' of Shaikh Muhammad Wad Surūr, grandfather of Shaikh at-Tayyib. In the morning each of us acquired what he needed in direction."<sup>1</sup>

Shaikh al-'Ubaid was also an affiliate of the Khatmiyyah and the Shādhiliyyah tariqahs. It is not indicated how he joined these tariqahs. He was quoted as saying that the Prophet peace be upon him had granted him the permission to initiate into these tariqahs.<sup>2</sup>

There is an assumption that Shaikh al-'Ubaid's relation with the Khatmiyyah tariqah started since he went on the Pilgrimage. In the Hijaz he met sayed al-Hasan al-Mirghani who ordered him to go back to the Sudan and light the fire of the Qur'an between the tomb of Shaikh Idrīs Ibn al-Arbāb and that of Shaikh Hasan Wad Hassūna. On returning Shaikh al-'Ubaid established his first permanent settlement in Umm Dubbān, which is exactly midway between the above mentioned Shaikhs' tombs, where he lighted the fire of the Qur'an.

Some hints in Sirāj as-Sālikīn reflect his acquaintance with the Khatmiyyah. For example in his discussion of the rules regulating the inter-relationship between the Shaikh and the murīd he was applying nearly the same rules as those of the Khatmiyyah founder in his message 'Minhat al-Ashāb'.<sup>3</sup> As regard the Shādhiliyyah his frequent reference to the 'Hikam Ibn 'Atā'Allāh' the chief propagator of the Shādhiliyyah, is enough proof of his relation to this tariqah.

Shaikh al-'Ubaid followed an independent style in explaining his beliefs to his followers. His main concern seemed to be the transmission

1. 'Abd al-Mahmūd Nūr ad-Da'im, Azahīr ar-Riyād, p.338.

2. Muhammad Ibn al-Hājj Nūr, Miftāḥ al-Basā'ir, p.54.

3. A. Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jubail, Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.47.

of the Ṣufic teachings in a form so simple and straightforward that it might be intelligible to his followers. His teachings form a call appealing to all the people.

Some Ṣufi Shaikhs like Ahmed at-Tayyib Ibn al-Bashīr for example, set a clear-cut boundary between the aspirants and the general followers who join the tariqah for obtaining grace ' li'l-tabarruk'. Their teachings deal with the pure mystical aspect as well as general guidance for the ordinary follower. For instance one finds among the written material belonging to Shaikh at-Tayyib those aspects which could easily be appreciated by the unilluminated like ' Hizb al-Amān ', a prayer, and ' Shurb al-K'as ', poetry. His book ' Kitāb al-Hikam ' which contains mystical and esoteric doctrines is accessible only to those who have acquired some, or even all the necessary mystical knowledge through the guidance of their Shaikhs.

Shaikh al-'Ubaid's tariqah is characterised by the absence of this element of discrimination between the practical and the esoteric beliefs.

The only written material conveying Shaikh al-'Ubaid's teachings is ' Sirāj as-Sālikīn ' the book written by his disciple Ibn al-Jubail. The teachings which Ibn al-Jubail wrote down exactly in their original form as he received them from his master strengthen the earlier observation that no esoteric doctrine is reserved for the initiates. There is no elaborate discussion on the doctrine of the Oneness of Being, nor any reference to the Muhammadan Reality or the Perfect Man. In fact the main theme is purely Ṣufi, discussing in details, the saints, the gnostics, the masters, the aspirants, the followers and the ritual of the tariqah; nevertheless it is approached in a simple style without any attempt at exposition or theorizing.

Shaikh al-'Ubaid also depended on a linguistic element which added to the simplicity of his style. That is the use of 'Saj' i.e. rhymed prose. He used short sentences in which the last words always have the same sound at their endings. Added to this is his use of colloquial rather than classical Arabic. This combination of short rhymed sentences and colloquial Arabic would make his teachings stick easily in the recipients mind. This also gave his teachings the advantage of pithiness.

Another characteristic of Shaikh al-'Ubaid's style is that he used the element of parables in order to make easy the understanding of his teachings for his followers. The ordinary Sudanese was accustomed to acquire moral or any sort of teaching through the use of stories, locally known as 'Ahājī', often told by the elders. The effectiveness of this method seemed to be realized by Shaikh al-'Ubaid for his teachings are full of stories relevant to the idea in question.

These elements of which Shaikh al-'Ubaid's style is made up show that he had a deep understanding of his milieu and the people around him.

#### His Approach to Sufi doctrines:-

Shaikh al-'Ubaid's tariqah was the Qādiriyyah as-Sammanīyyah. As was said previously he was also an affiliate of the Khatmiyyah and the Shādhiliyyah. In spite of this, his approach to Sufi concepts manifests apparent differences from the essentials of the tariqahs he was acquainted with.

In his discussion of saints Shaikh al-'Ubaid divided them into three categories, a gnostic saint 'walī 'ārīf', a transmuted Shaikh 'Shaikh Wāsil' and a mystic 'Sufi'.<sup>1</sup>

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1. A.Ibn-Ibrāhīm al-Jubail, Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.

In his description of the gnostic saint, Shaikh al-'Ubaid differs from the founders of the *tarīqahs* he was acquainted with. Shaikh at-Tayyib Ibn al-Bashīr, for example, started his description of the 'walī' by giving a detailed account of the number of 'awliyā', their different categories and the status of each category. He divided them into 'nuqabā' chiefs, 'mujabā' preeminent ones, 'abdāl' substitutes, 'akhyār' chosen ones, 'awtād' stakes, and the 'umanā' who were of the *malāmātī*<sup>1</sup> category.

Then he divided them into four divisions, 'rijāl al-bāṭin' men of the esoteric teachings, *rijāl az-zāhir*, men of the exoteric, *rijāl al-hadd*, those of the heights 'a'rāf', and *rijāl al-matla* who were the *malāmātīs*. Then he divided them into various categories of axes 'aqtāb'.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Mirghani's description of 'walī' is only generalizations of certain characteristics which are essentially mystical. For example he said : "A walī has a spiritual ascension 'mi'rāj rūhī'; he has a place in the divine presence; his spirit has knelt on the carpet of nearness; he has got divine illuminations.....etc."<sup>3</sup> A non-illuminate would not benefit from such a definition.

Shaikh at-Tayyib Ibn al-Bashīr, depended for his description of the 'walī' on the mystical sources, precisely Ibn al-'Arabī and al-Jafri, as he frequently referred to them. His output was thus purely mystical and it would not appeal to those devoid of mystical gifts. The same applies to al-Mirghani.

1. Explained in Chapter 3.

2. 'Abd al-Mahmūd Nūr ad-Dā'im, *Azāhīr ar-Riyād*, pp.134-140.

3. Muhammad 'Uthmān al-Mirghani, *al-Hibāt al-Muqtabasah*, p.30.

Though his description embodied the mystical beliefs adopted by both the above-mentioned Shaikhs, yet Shaikh al-'Ubaid took a different method. Instead of elaborating on who was the 'walī' and what was his status, Shaikh al-'Ubaid taught his followers how a 'walī' acquired the quality and status of the 'walī'. What he said could easily be understood even by a non-illuminate.

Shaikh al-'Ubaid at first explained the meaning of the word 'walī' from an etymological view. He considered the word 'walī' as taken from the word 'muwālāt' continuity. A walī is a person who obeys God's orders continuously. Being so, God would consequently undertake this person's charge 'Yatawalā amrahu'.

He quoted as a proof the sacred tradition : "He who adores Me never ceases to draw near Me until I love him; when I love him, I am the hearing by which he hears, the sight by which he sees, the hand by which he grasps and the foot by which he walks."<sup>1</sup>

Al-'Ubaid considered it possible for the individual to attain such a divine grace as related in the tradition. For him this revealed grace is constituted in the individual's capacity to assimilate the divine qualities by the help of God. "Yamudduhu bi awṣāfihi".<sup>2</sup> This capacity could be acquired only by involving one's self in a conflict with his soul. He believed that only when the individual succeeds in allowing his spirit to rule his self could he obtain this capacity. He said : "Be conscious of your servile qualities, and God will give you divine qualities; be conscious of your limited qualities as man, confess you are a weakling and God will give you of his power; confess you are

1. A.Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jubail, Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.3.

2. A.Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jubail, Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.3.

poor and humble and God will supply you from his providence and greatness."<sup>1</sup>  
This is the only way by which man could be nearer to God.

Further on he said : "Man won't be loved by God except through complete submission to God, and he won't be nearer to God unless he develops the quality of the transmutation of the self "Fanā' 'an an-nafs". For him self-humiliation and not pride would lead man to spiritual security.

He emphasised that this humility could not be reached except when man breaks the habitual order of things in himself 'yakhriq al-'ādah fī nafshi'. He was asked about the meaning of 'Kharq al-'ādah' in the self; he said "It is self-realization". Man's belief of himself is deceptive. He thinks that he is supreme and capable of everything. He is full of pride in himself. This is the natural way with man. Through this pride man lost the right direction in which he should orientate himself. He distorted the meaning and the reality of his status. So to gain the true self-realization man is capable of achieving divine qualities which would in turn bring him near to God. Consequently God will provide man generously, with the qualities revealed in the mentioned tradition, even without the invocation.

Shaikh al-'Ubaid was asked how can God answer a man even if he has not invoked Him? He answered: "If God loved a man and made him one of His favoured ones, He would answer him before he invokes Him. He is not a gnostic who has found that God's answer is nearer to him than his invocation, but he is a gnostic who has no invocation because he is absorbed and in a lasting presence with God."<sup>2</sup>

1. A.Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jubail, Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.4.

2. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.5.

This for al-'Ubaid is the nature of a walī. He added that the walī's objective is always divine. If one sees the creation and fails to realize that it is only a manifestation of the Creator, that means that one is deprived of divine illumination which would enable him to do so. For him the saint is a person who has achieved self-realization which in turn enables him to achieve harmony and balance in relation to the creation. He said: "If the whole universe is assembled in a corner of the gnostics' heart, he would not feel it because a gnostic is not veiled from a state by a state, or by sobriety 'sahw' from intoxication 'sukr' or by division from unity. In fact externally the division is clear to the gnostic, but deeply, in his heart, unity is realized".<sup>1</sup> A gnostic would reach a state in which he considers hunger as satisfaction, vigil as sleep, and poverty as abundance.

To conclude his definition of the reality of the gnostic saint he later used a metaphorical comparison between three seekers. He said that the person who indulges in mundane affairs is a female, metaphorically referring to the weakness and invalidity of his purpose. On the other hand, the person who worships God for fear of punishment and longing for Paradise only is a hermaphrodite, metaphorically referring to the uncertainty of his purpose. It means that in his heart he has the tendency to secularize his life and the only obstacle is this fear of punishment. So he becomes religious just because he wants to substitute the worldly pleasures for those in Paradise. Compared with these two is the worshipper who worships God for the sake of God. He is a male, metaphorically referring to the unity of his purpose.<sup>2</sup>

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1.. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.5.

2. " " , p.6.

The second division of saints includes the transmuted Shaikh 'Shaikh Wāsil'. Shaikh al-'Ubaid said that the Shaikh who is characterized by five qualities corresponding to the number of sounds in the word 'al-Shaikh', should be considered as 'Shaikh Wāsil'.

The first sound is 'alif-a'. The quality derived from this sound is 'alīf' i.e. amicable. So the Shaikh should be friendly and at the same time he should endeavour to make people live peacefully and establish friendly relations with each other 'Yu'allif bayn an-nās'.

The second sound is 'Lam-L'. The quality derived from this sound is 'Līn' i.e. tenderness and good-temper. The third sound is 'shīn-sh'. The quality derived from this sound is 'shukr' i.e. thankfulness. The Shaikh should be grateful to God in every situation, good or evil.

The fourth sound is 'Ya-Y'. The quality derived from this sound is 'ya'mur and yanhā' i.e. the Shaikh should instruct people to follow the right path. 'Yanhā 'an al-munkar'.

The fifth and last sound is 'Khā' 'خ'. The quality derived from this sound is 'khashyah' i.e. fear of God. The Shaikh should fear God in every respect. Describing the Shaikh in this way is also a point in which al-'Ubaid differs from the founders of the tariqahs he followed.<sup>1</sup>

Then follows the description of the reality of the mystic 'Ṣufi' which seemed to be considered as different from the gnostic saint and the transmuted Shaikh discussed above. The description of the 'Ṣufi' followed the same pattern of sound analysis.

In the first two sounds 'alif-a- and Lam-L-' the Ṣufi resembles the Shaikh, and should develop the same two qualities outlined before.

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1. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.7.



From the third sound 'S', derives the quality of 'safā', purity. The Sufi should be pure in spirit by purifying his self from any inclination to sensuous pleasures.

From the fourth sound 'Waw-W', derives the quality constituted in the word 'wālā', that is the noun 'muwālāt' continuity. The Sufi should continue with undertaking the divine orders as revealed in the Qur'ān and Shari'ah.

Constituted in the sound 'f' is the quality of 'wafā', fulfilment. The Sufi should fulfil all the obligations imposed upon him from God towards God. A Sufi is called so because he is so pure in his relationship with God.

In addition to sound analysis Shaikh al-'Ubaid discussed the nature of the Sufi. He said that the reality of the Sufi is that if ever he commits a sin, this should be only once in every twenty years. He was asked whether in this sense a Sufi should be considered as infallible 'm'asūm'. He said that the Sufi is not infallible but protected 'mahfūz'. He continued: "The question is not that a Sufi commits a sin or not, but what matters is that he should not persist in committing sins".<sup>1</sup>

A Sufi also should "open the door of humility and close that of pride, should open the door of poverty and close that of indulgence, should open the door of vigils and close that of sleep. He should offer what he has in his pocket and wait for what is in Absence 'ghayb'; "anfiq mā fī al-jayb, ya'tīk mā fīl-ghayb".

This saying of al-'Ubaid is a widely circulating proverb. A Sufi should be concerned with his own not another's defects. He should ignore his own gifts and qualities.

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1. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.17.

A Sufi should follow the path of the mystics 'ṭarīq al-qawm' by avoiding being a hypocrite. That is he should not separate Shari'ah from ḥaqīqah and ṭarīqah, and he should bear in mind that any misuse of either leads to heresy 'zandaqah'.<sup>1</sup>

It should be noticed that in the case of the concept of being a Sufi, al-'Ubaid did not differ from his masters in the essentials he discussed. The only difference is in the way he explained it.

Speaking about ṭarīq al-qawm Shaikh al-'Ubaid did not omit to explain also the meaning of the word 'qawm'. Linguistically he said qawm originated from the verb 'qāma' and the noun 'qiyām' i.e. undertaking. They were called 'qawm' because they obey all the divine orders. Not only this but they did things which are not obligatory to emphasise their strong and conscientious obedience of God's orders. Explaining this he said that they would consider 'al-mubāh' a thing which is acceptable, as 'al-makrūh' the thing which is not strictly prohibited. They also considered 'al-makrūh' as 'al-harām' the strictly prohibited thing. They considered 'al-harām' infidelity, in the sense that every 'harām' is unforgivable. He finally called 'al-qawm' the divine ones 'ar-rabāniyyūn'.<sup>2</sup>

Shaikh al-'Ubaid also differed in his idea about Shaikhship in general. Al-Mirghani divided the types of Shaikhship into three as was shown previously. In the case of al-'Ubaid, he divided it into five types. The first is a Shaikh of a group of people 'Shaikh al-jamā'ah', appointed to look after their affairs. This is an organizational responsibility dealing mostly with secular affairs.

1. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.18.

2. " " , pp.19-20.

The second is 'Shaikh Irshād' i.e. an instructor who advises his followers to behave according to the moral standards of religion. Al-Mirghani called this Shaikh 'Shaikh qirā'ah'.

The third Shaikh is Shaikh tarbiyah i.e. guidance, who guides his followers into the path through 'sulūk' traversing and 'khalwah' meditation in seclusion.

The fourth type is 'Shaikh tarqiyah' promotion. This is the Shaikh, as al-'Ubaid put it, "who brings up his followers with the eye of satisfaction 'ain ar-ridā" until they reach their goal".

The fifth type is 'Shaikh niqālah' transmittance. A heretic may be turned into an attracted one 'majdhūb', just by looking at this Shaikh. If this Shaikh instructs, his instruction is mixed with the light of his knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Speaking about the saint's miracles 'karamāt', Shaikh al-'Ubaid supported the principle that saints perform miracles not as powers inherent in them, but as favours from God. He said that the highest of these favours is that a saint is provided with an angel created in the same features as the saint. This angel acts as a substitute for the saint. It might even stay in the saint's place. He said that this belief was expressed and confirmed by 'ahl al-Basīrah an-nafīḥah' i.e. the gnostics.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of every possibility of miracles being bestowed upon the saint from God, the true saint is the one who considers these miracles as an illusion, and attributes every incident to God. A true saint as well is the one who considers miracles not as a grace or favour but as a

1. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.10.

2. Miftāh al-Basāir, p.47.

'fitnah' or test of the purity of the saint's spirit, and as a trust 'amanah'. A true saint is the one who carefully protects this 'amanah' and never allows it to be known except to those he trusts. For miracles are secrets 'asrār' which God places in trustworthy individuals. Those who use miracles for personal fame and glory would suffer both on earth and in Heaven.<sup>1</sup>

#### FEATURES OF HIS TARIQAH : -

The essential step in affiliation to a tariqah is the initiation ceremony which involves a vow of allegiance 'bai'ah' to the master. Originally the 'bai'ah' is intended as an acceptance and recognition of the Shaikh as a representative of the founder of the tariqah.<sup>2</sup> Both the Qadiriyyah as-Sammāniyyah and the Khatmiyyah tariqahs of which Shaikh al-'Ubaid was an affiliate contained this essential aspect in the forms referred to earlier. Shaikh al-'Ubaid's tariqah seems to exclude this aspect. The author of 'Miftāh al-Basā'ir' wrote : "I went to Shaikh al-'Ubaid to initiate me. I asked him to allow me to take the vow of allegiance. He said to me, "I have no 'bai'ah'. My 'bai'ah' is to say the prayers upon the Prophet 'peace be upon him' regularly".<sup>3</sup>

Then I asked him about the allegiance which leads to the knowledge of God. He said : "Allegiance is of three types. The first is a secular allegiance in which the individual indulges in the mundane life. The effect of this type of allegiance is limited and ends once the individual dies. The other type is an allegiance to the after-life which is medium. In this allegiance the individual's incentive in being religious is to gain

1. Miftāh al-Basā'ir, p.51.

2. " " " , p. 3.

3. Muhammad Ibn al-Hājj Nūr, Miftāh al-Basā'ir, p.3.

Paradise. The third type of allegiance, which is the highest, is that in which the individual worships God for the sake of God".<sup>1</sup>

He said that, "the soul which chooses the third type of allegiance has four dogs following and hindering its progress in this direction. These dogs are the devil 'Iblīs', the self 'nafs' the world 'ad-dunyā' and caprice." He said, "a man with one locust in his hand is better than one who has thousands of them flying". The thousands of locusts signify the secular involvement, which embodies riches and sensuous pleasures. All this is in vain since once the person dies he leaves it behind. The one locust in the hand is the after-life involvement. It signifies poverty, ascetism and self-repression. Though a difficult task yet it is rewarding since it leads to spiritual happiness in both worlds".<sup>2</sup>

A further indication that the aspect of 'bai'ah' is excluded is when some women came to the Shaikh to take the 'bai'ah'. He told them, "my bai'ah for a woman is for her to keep quiet, to stay at her home, obey her God and guardian and guard herself".<sup>3</sup>

Another important feature of the orders is that the aspirant should have a Shaikh as his guide otherwise he cannot reach his goal. As was previously indicated, Sufis believe that an aspirant who has no Shaikh, his Shaikh would be the devil.

In his tariqah Shaikh al-'Ubaid accepted this principle and defended it strongly. He considers the Shaikh an agent to help the initiate to explore for him his imperfections and the misconceptions of his nature. He teaches him to realize the favours God has bestowed on him 'ihsān Allāh'.

1. Miftāh al-Rasā'ir; p.47.

2. " " , p.51.

3. " " , p.56.

He accompanies him in his journey along the path until he achieves his goal.<sup>1</sup>

In addition Shaikh al-'Ubaid pointed out other procedures for an aspirant who could not find a Shaikh. He said, "Nowadays the traversing of the path is not an easy task; its boat has been drowned and its oars have been shattered, it is not easy to find a guide".<sup>2</sup>

So he proposed five means which a seeker could take as an alternative. The first of these is a trustworthy brother or friend whom the aspirant should appoint as a guardian checking his behaviour and states. The second is that he should carefully mingle with the people especially his enemies. He should carefully detect their defects and misbehaviour, and endeavour to avoid committing these himself. This is because the people would serve as a mirror in which he might discover his own particular faults.

A third suggestion is that the aspirant should regularly read 'kutub al-qawm' the books of the Sufis. This is the most recommended method since "these days people tend not to accept advice from human beings like themselves". Another possibility is that the aspirant should regularly attend 'majālis al-'ilm' study-gatherings, in which the Qur'ān, the Sharī'ah and Sufism are discussed.

Finally, if the aspirant fails in any of these processes, he should develop the habit of saying the prayers upon the Prophet 'peace be upon him' continuously. This would purify his soul, guide and help him to attain his intention.<sup>3</sup> The author of Miftāḥ al-Basā'ir said that he asked al-'Ubaid about how a gnostic and a sincere aspirant may be identified.

1. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.12.

2. " " " , p.36.

3. " " " , p.12.

He told him that in this age there were neither gnostics nor sincere aspirants. When asked about the alternative for a seeker of knowledge he said: "The individual should control his tongue, isolate himself and say the prayers upon the Prophet 'peace be upon him' regularly".<sup>1</sup>

Shaikh al-'Ubaid adopted the same rules concerning the aspirants, agreed upon by all the orders. The only distinction is in the way he put forward these rules to his followers.

He said that there are five rules concerning the aspirant. The aspirant should be blind, dumb, deaf, a leper and a frog. He should be blind in the sense that he ignores the existence of every secular attraction like beauty, entertainment and any sort of pleasures enjoyed by the eye. He should realize the invalidity of these things and consider them an embodiment of temptation 'fitna'. He should be dumb in the sense that he should not talk too much, nor talk about anything other than what relates to his religious obligations. He should be deaf in the sense that he should not hear anything that relates to the secular life, nor listen to evil things said by others. To be a leper means that an aspirant should consider himself as a contagious person and live in seclusion in order to concentrate on his religious duties. To be a frog means that he should always be clean like a frog which spends most of its time under water.<sup>2</sup>

The first three conditions of blindness, dumbness and deafness symbolize asceticism with all its attributes. Leprosy symbolizes seclusion 'khalwah', and the frog symbolizes cleanliness 'tahārah'. These three combine important elements in Sufism.

Shaikh al-'Ubaid also pointed out seven characteristics which, if

1. Miftāh al-Basā'ir, p.47.

2. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.34.

detected in the aspirant, should discredit him. These are love of honour 'hub al-jāh' avarice 'tam'a', disorderly behaviour 'fawḍā', injustice, 'zulm', miserliness 'bukhl', accepting morally-degraded persons 'musāḥabat al-fussāq' and frequent travelling 'safar' for reasons connected with the world.

In addition to these rules which exist in nearly all the orders, Shaikh al-'Ubaid suggested a method for the aspirant by which he could test whether he is a true aspirant or a pretentious. This method is constituted in the analysis of the sounds forming the word 'darwīsh' dervish. The true dervish is characterized by five virtues represented by each sound. The sound 'd-د' refers to his being 'dayin' religious. The sound 'r-ر' refers to his being 'ra'ūf' pitiful. The sound 'w-و' implies that he is 'wārī' cautious. The sound 'y-ي' refers to the fact that he fears God 'yakhāf Allāh'. The sound 'sh-ش' implies that he is grateful to God, 'shākīr Allāh'.

The pretentious dervish is also characterized by five vices implicit in the sounds. The sound 'd-د' refers to his being 'dajjāl' liar. The sound 'r-ر' implies that he is 'raqīb'. The sound 'w-و' refers to his being 'waswās' i.e. whisperer. The sound 'y-ي' refers to the fact that he has no hope in God's mercy 'yā'is min rahmat Allāh'. The sound 'sh-ش' implies that he is a 'shaitān' devil.<sup>1</sup>

Depending on the two categories outlined above the aspirant should evaluate his own status. He should juxtapose his virtues and vices with those mentioned to discover to which category he belongs.

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1. Miftah al-Basā'ir, p.48.



# ESSENTIALS OF HIS TARIQAH : -

Shaikh al-'Ubaid's tariqah, like all other tariqahs in the Sudan, embraced the essential characteristics of Sufism. His tariqah is also concerned with diverting the individual's interest from the superficial physical and material existence, towards the spiritual aspect of his being.

As a means to achieve the aforementioned goal Shaikh al-'Ubaid generally applied the same disciplinary methods which constitute repentance, asceticism, fear of God, poverty, patience and satisfaction.

He summarized the essentials of Sufism in the following statement :  
 "The enemies of spiritual illumination are four.

The first is the world 'dunyā' whose weapon is greed. The prison for this enemy is seclusion 'uzlah'. The second enemy is the Devil 'shaitān' whose weapon is gluttony. The prison for this enemy is hunger. The third enemy is the self whose weapon is sleep. The prison for this enemy is night vigils. The fourth enemy is desire 'al-hawā' whose weapon is speech. Its prison is quietude 'samt' ".<sup>1</sup>

In addition Shaikh al-'Ubaid isolated four key principles as central to his tariqah. The first of these is Love. He said that the tariqah is love and belief 'mahabbah wa i'tiqād', not effort and striving 'kadd wa-jtihād'. The bond of love between the aspirant and his master is essential in his success. Being near to his master is not as effective as loving him, even if the aspirant is distant. He said that if nearness is fruitful, it would have helped Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab, and if absence is harmful, it would have affected the Negus 'king of Abyssinia'.<sup>2</sup>

1. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.57.

2. " " " , p.15.

If the aspirant sincerely loves his master the divine help 'madad' will emanate upon him. Shaikh al-'Ubaid drew a simile which clarifies the necessity for love. He said that, "the aspirant who loves his Shaikh is like the lower grounds at the banks of the Nile. When the Nile floods the water eventually flows towards the lower grounds without the consent of the Nile. So when the aspirant loves his Shaikh, the divine grace steals the secret 'Sirr' from the Shaikh and passes it to the aspirant without the consent of the Shaikh".

He used another simile to explain this concept of love in the case of the aspirant who does not love his master. He said that this aspirant is like the high lands at the banks of the Nile. The floods won't reach it. He is also like a turned over pot which if one pours water on it, the water will run down quickly.

In this case, even if the Shaikh intends to pass his secret to the aspirant, God will hinder him from receiving it. This is further on clarified in a parable which says : "There was a Shaikh who had two disciples. One of them loved the Shaikh while the other did not, yet the Shaikh loved him. It happened that the Shaikh found them both sleeping and decided to favour the beloved with some emanation. Instead this emanation passed towards the lover. The Shaikh was annoyed and tried in vain to pass this emanation to the beloved. At last he gave up and realized that it was God's will".<sup>1</sup>

Through the concept of love Shaikh al-'Ubaid compared the status of the aspirant and the attracted 'majdhūb'. He said that, "the aspirant is bitten by the snakes of the tariqah while the attracted is bitten by the snakes of the haqiqah. The aspirant inclines towards the love of

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1. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, pp.21-22.

the master while the attracted one inclines towards the love of God. Yet the aspirant is favoured by God more than the attracted one. This is because the attracted one is purified without any effort or mediumship, while the aspirant strives in the Path with the help of his master."<sup>1</sup>

The second principle is sincerity 'ikhlās'. Shaikh al-'Ubaid said that the reality of faithfulness is that the aspirant must be totally directed to God in every aspect. Faithfulness is the purification of the aspirant's intentions from everything that obstructs his realization of the existence of God. He said, "There is no achievement without hard effort, and no hard effort without faithfulness. Faithfulness is the essence of activity. It cannot be acquired from guides or books. It is a light with which God brightens the hearts of those who love Him".

He also said that, "what is apparent in one's actions is related to what is hidden in the depth of his heart". To explain this he said that if a man obeyed God in a house within many houses each of which was closed, all the people would know that he obeyed Him. If he disobeyed God in the same situation, people would also know that he disobeyed Him. So faithfulness is vital in the aspirant's success."<sup>2</sup>

The third principle is quietude 'samt'. Quietude is a quality which should be acquired by every muslim, but in the case of the aspirant, as al-'Ubaid put it, it is a necessity. He quoted many Qur'ānic verses and Traditions pointing out the benefits of quietude. He also quoted Jesus 'peace be upon him', saying, "Worship 'ibādah' is of ten parts. Nine of these are in quietude and the remaining part is in escape 'al-firār' ".  

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1. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.25.

2. " " " , p.29.

Shaikh al-'Ubaid said that the importance of quietude as revealed in Jesus' saying is due to the many blameworthy acts the tongue performs. These include lying, gossip, hypocrisy, boasting, harming others and falsehood. All these and countless others are acts contravening moral law. Although light and easy for the tongue, yet they are heavy enough to pull the person down on his face into Hell. Al-'Ubaid said that man's capital on earth is the years he lives. Any time wasted in this immoral behaviour is a huge loss in the after-life."<sup>1</sup>

The fourth principle is patience 'sabr'. This virtue is considered vital in achieving the quality of quietude. It is only through patience and self-repression that the tongue may be controlled. Patience is considered the centre from which all the moral qualities derive. Al-'Ubaid said that there are six 'S' (sād sounds) branching from the 'S' in 'sabr' patience.

These are samt 'quietude', sidq 'truth', siyānah 'protection', samāmah 'straightforwardness', salāh 'righteousness', and salābah 'strength'. There is only one behaviour which embodies all the virtues of patience and that is forbearance 'tahammul al-adhā'.<sup>2</sup>

Here Shaikh al-'Ubaid employed his style of using parables to explain moral behaviour. He said that a man met a wanderer crying. He asked him if he was longing for God. The wanderer said that he was neither longing for God nor thinking of longing for Him. He thought that he was a heretic and so took him to a faqīh 'jurisconsult'. The faqīh asked the wanderer and he answered as before. He was beaten but this did not help in making him change his mind. He was then taken to a judge and

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1. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.29.

2. " " " , p.30.

again he refused to deny what he said. At last the judge ordered him to be taken to a gnostic. He repeated the same answer to the gnostic who was so patient with him, and kept trying to make him explain what he meant. At last he said, "how can I long for God while I am living in his everlasting presence". The gnostic sent for the people who tortured him to apologise and the wanderer willingly forgave them".<sup>1</sup> In this case the wanderer manifested both patience and forbearance.

Forbearance also could be revealed in responding to any sort of injustice by the moral virtue which corresponds to it. Patience is an important factor in such an achievement.

The aspirant's patience is always tested by either of four states; these are happiness, distress, obedience and disobedience. If he is happy he should be grateful to God. In distress he should be patient; in obedience, which is reflected in good behaviour, he should realize that it is only God who has guided him to righteousness. In disobedience he should repent. Exultation in happiness, panic in distress, pride in obedience and insistence on disobedience all manifest impatience.<sup>2</sup>

On one occasion Shaikh al-'Ubaid demonstrated for his followers the first two qualities. His son 'Ali al-Karrār said that on his wedding day his brother Shaikh Idrīs died, so he stopped the wedding proceedings. His father al-'Ubaid sent to him saying, "carry on with the wedding. I am neither delighted in it nor distressed by your brother's death. Both events are the same for me".<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the essentials of his tariqah, al-'Ubaid emphasised

1. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.31.

2. " " " , p.33.

3. Miftāh al-Basā'ir, p.43.

the importance of hunger. He said, "too much eating veils revelation 'mukāshafah'; hunger soaks the heart with lights, secrets, divine visions and emanations".

#### DHIKR : -

The general regulations 'ādāb' of the dhikr apply to the dhikr in Shaikh al-'Ubaid's tariqah. These include cleanliness, facing the Qiblah (prayers direction) solitude and concentration. The dhikr in this tariqah constitutes the following ten parts:-

1. Basmalah 'In the name of God the compassionate, the merciful'
2. Subhān Allāh 'Glory be to God'
3. Al-Hamdu li'llāh 'praise is due to God'
4. Allāhu Akbar 'God is Greatest'
5. La illāha illa Allāh 'there is no god but God'
6. Allāh Allāh, "God, God"
7. As-salāt 'alā' n-Nabī "calling down the blessings upon the Prophet  
'peace be upon him' "
8. Al-istighfār 'forgiveness asking'
9. At-tawba 'I repent before God'
10. Ya Hayy ya Qayyum, 'O the Living and the Eternal'

The difference between this dhikr and that of the Qādiriyyah as-Sammanīyyah which was the source for this tariqah, is that it has twice the formulas of as-Sammanīyyah dhikr. Another difference is that each formula is repeated two hundred times at dawn and in the evening. Then the aspirant repeats 'as-salāt 'alā'n-Nabī' one thousand five hundred times.

The aspirant should start his dhikr with the 'basmalah' and end it with 'hamdalah' each three, five or seven times. Then if it is prayer time he should say two 'rak'ahs', if it is not he should repeat his invocation

and say "as-salāt 'alā'n-Nabī". In all dhikr the aspirant must use a rosary 'sibhah'.

A new element in al-'Ubaid's dhikr which I have not found in either of the Sammāniyyah or the Khatmiyyah, is what he called 'maqāsid al-adhkār' the intentions of the dhikrs.<sup>1</sup> These he considered as the soul of dhikr. The aspirant should concentrate not on the verbal but on the meanings of dhikr. As well he should concentrate on the intentions, 'al-maqāsid'.

The dhikr intentions are verses from the Qur'an coinciding with the dhikr formula. The author mentioned only three intentions. The first is the one connected with dhikr al-istighfār. Before repeating the formula, the aspirant should recite the verse "Yet whoso doth evil or wrongeth his own soul, then seeketh pardon of Allāh, will find Allāh Forgiving, Merciful".<sup>2</sup>

The aspirant should imagine that the moral in this verse is directed to him. So he should answer by saying "Oh God, your sinful slave is facing Thee, confessing that he has sinned, longing for forgiveness; I promise to be obedient and forsake disobedience, all with your guidance". Then he repeats al-istighfār two hundred times.

For 'as-salat'alā'n-Nabī' he recites the verse "Lo! Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation".<sup>3</sup> Again he should consider this verse as directed to him and answer by saying, "Oh God, your slave is between Your Hands, wishing you will accept him, his means is the remembrance of Your Messenger and prayers upon him". Then

1. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.60.

2. Qur'an IV, 104.

3. Qur'an XXXIII, 56.

he performs the 'tasliyah' formula two hundred times.

The third intention is connected with the 'hailala'. The aspirant should recite the verse "So know (O Muhammad) that there is no god but God.<sup>1</sup>" He should consider the verse as addressing him and should answer by saying, "Oh God, your slave is between your hands, sincerely confessing that there is no god but God", and continue with the 'hailala' for two hundred times. The intentions concerning the remaining seven formulae are not mentioned.

Collective dhikr is also performed in the same way as in the other tariqahs, in a circle 'halaqah'. One exception is that Shaikh al-'Ubaid issued an order that from those forming the circle no one should enter inside it. Only four persons were allowed. These were the leader of the dhikr, the muqaddam, anyone who was granted permission to enter or a majdhūb 'attracted'.<sup>2</sup>

The collective dhikr is also performed on four occasions. These are the Eid 'the first day after the month of fasting', Eid al-Adhā, the Prophet's Birthday 'mawlid' and the "Isrā'", the Prophet's night journey.

Shaikh al-'Ubaid's birthday or the day on which he died are not celebrated by his followers. Thus there is no holiyya 'annual ceremony' connected with this tariqah. Neither of his khalīfahs, who were all members of the family, had encouraged this celebration which is so common in many tariqahs in the Sudan.

1. Qur'ān, XLVII, 19.

2. Miftāh al-Basā'ir, p.54.



### THE SHAIKH'S MAXIMS :-

With reference to the study of Shaikh al-'Ubaid's style, it was mentioned that he used to convey his instructions in precise rhymed sentences. The proverbial effect implicit in these sentences was a factor in their widespread usage among many people outside the circle of the followers. Here are some examples of his sayings:-

1. " من لزم حرف الصاد صار عن كل فعلٍ ذميمٍ صاد "

This maxim is a summary of all the qualities and virtues formerly discussed in the essentials of his tariqa, under the title patience. These were included in the sound 'S' and they derive from 'sabr'. The maxim says that if one kept himself within the scope of the virtues beginning with the sound 'S', he would eventually avoid committing any disgraceful deed.<sup>1</sup>

2. " من لم يتجبر المر لا يكون حر "

This is referring to the effort and striving an aspirant undergoes in order to reach his goal. The liberation of the spirit from domination by the self, cannot be achieved except through a hard process. This hard process is the withdrawal from the sensuous worldly life by all the means offered by Sufism. In the maxim this is symbolically referred to as the swallowing of a sour drink.<sup>2</sup>

3. " من أراد أن يرى الدر في خمره فلا بد أن يقاسى ظلمة بحر " "

Literally this means that if one wants to enjoy wearing pearls, he should bear the trouble of diving into the sea; not diving in its modern sense. Shaikh al-'Ubaid said that divers searching for pearls could do so by controlling their breath and this was not an easy task. Explaining the moral implicit in the above words, he said that in religious behaviour

1. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.30.

2. " " " , p.41.

there are certain things called 'rukhas' dispensations, like saying the prayers in shorter form when travelling and breakfasting in Ramadān in travelling or in sickness. He said that these dispensations are intended for 'al-'awām' the ordinary people who are just content that they are called Moslems. In the case of 'al-khawās' the aspirants, who are like the divers, they should be prepared to undertake their religious responsibility under any circumstances. Their pearls are spiritual illumination and the true knowledge of God.<sup>1</sup>

4. "من أراد أن يكون في بحر النور غائص فليكن مما في أيدي الناس آيس" .

This means that if one wants to attain spiritual illumination one should not depend on people in anything that relates to one. Here is implicit the virtue of quietism with all its attributes. The aspirant should be contented with every condition and refrain from asking people for things however impelled he may be to do so. By asking people the aspirant is indirectly turning from God, and making gods of those he asks by applying to them God's attributes of providence and mercy.<sup>2</sup> He would be enslaved to those who give to him and lose his self-respect.

5. "لا تكمل الفراسة لمن في قلبه حب الرئاسة"

Love for leadership and prominence is an obstacle for attaining true knowledge about oneself and hence about God. It was said that the last element of which the soul is purified is love for leadership. This element constitutes many sorts of evil. A leader is surrounded by people most of whom may try to befriend him by evil means. The most dangerous of these is praise 'al-madh'. People may tend to praise the leader with virtues

1. Sirāj as-Sālikīn, p.44.

2. " " " , p.46.

he has not got. The person may rely on what people say and become ignorant about himself, thus losing a major factor in the knowledge of God. Praise also extinguishes any hope of spiritual illumination.

Shaikh al-'Ubaid was asked whether the praise the poets bestow on the saints would affect them. He said in the case of the saints praise would not affect them because they couldn't be easily deceived. Yet in one respect praise acts as a trigger and motivates the saint to manifest his ability given to him by God.<sup>1</sup>

6. "كثرة النوم توريث الحزن الطويل"

Too much sleeping brings lasting misery. Al-'Ubaid explained this by saying that there are angels who descend late at night with mercy for those who are awake. If they did not find anyone, they spread it on the ground and mixed it with grass. The animals eat the grass and mercy comes in the form of milk. Had it not been for milk the gnostics would have been distinguishable by flashing light. Another form of mercy is that brought by the saints coming from the divine presence 'hadrah'. These saints inspect their followers and can recognize the vigilants by the gleam in their eyes. So they provide them with emanations. Those sleeping would not acquire any grace.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Miftāh al-Baṣā'ir, pp.47-48.

2. " " , p.45.

### CONCLUSION:

#### THE INFLUENCE OF SUFISM AND ITS FUTURE IN THE SUDAN

Sufism is primarily concerned with inner experience and spiritual illumination; with the soul not the self. Its goal is the after-life 'al-āk̄hira' not this world 'al-dunya'. Sufism is by no means concerned with the historical development of a society whether socially or politically. In spite of this Sufism manifested certain influences upon the society in which it survived both socially and politically in addition to its essential religious impact. This may be because Sufism itself, in its ethics and organization, betrayed certain social implications. The development of permanent settlements together with the establishing of a relationship between the members, regulated by strict rules, is in itself a social activity.

The aspects of the influence of Sufism in the Sudan may be divided into two main phases, the first from 1500 to 1800 and the second from 1800 to the present time.

The first phase (1500-1800) is concerned with the pre-mature stage of Sufism in the Sudan when all the activity revolved around the Shaikh who later came to be known locally as the Faki 'Faḳīḥ'. This phase was characterized by the predominance of the saint-cult.

The most significant aspect of influence at this stage was the religious influence. As was made clear earlier, Sufism was introduced into the Sudan at the same time as the introduction of Islam. It was also stated that it was the Sufis who contributed most to the spreading of Islamic teachings among the masses. At this phase Sufism was not introduced in the form of organized orders. Individual learned men

arrived in the Sudan either by their own initiative or invited by the rulers. They established the first centres for the spreading of Islam and Sufism. The Sufis in this phase dominated the religious scene without encountering any troubles. This is because they assumed the double function of teaching the fundamental dogmas and practices of Islam as well as Sufism. Hence a Sufi was called a Faki 'Faqīh', Jurisconsult. Many Shaikhs in at-Tabaqāt were referred to as combining fiqh 'religious law' and tasawwuf 'mysticism'. They were both Sufis and 'Ulamā'. This is why at this stage there were few traces of controversy between the few 'ulamā' and the Sufis. Even those insignificant cases of controversy did not take the form of basic opposition to Sufism in theory. They were only cases in which the 'ulamā' considered the Sufis to have deviated from the norm of the Shari'ah. Examples of these are found in the controversy between Judge Dushain and Shaikh Idris over the question of smoking, and with Shaikh Muhammed al-Hamīm, the malāmātī, over his marriage to more than four wives among whom were sisters.

The above-mentioned facts contributed to the domination of Sufism and its religious influence over the country. Islamic activity at first was limited to conversion only. This is reflected in the way Ibn Dayf Allah described the religious situation in the Sudan before the arrival of the first Shaikhs during the Funj Sultanate. He mentioned that there were no schools for teaching the Qur'an nor any religious teaching, even the simplest rules of marriage and divorce were not known. This comment by Ibn Dayf Allah who had already witnessed the basic changes in the religious situation brought about by the Shaikhs, reflects that the first element emphasised after the conversion aspect was the study of the Shari'ah. Shari'ah is based on Qur'anic texts and the text of certain traditions. So the Shaikhs started teaching both elements.

The first organized schools for teaching the Qur'ān were the Khalwas. These were first established by Shaikh Mahmūd al-'Arakī. On his arrival, after finishing his studies in Egypt, he founded about seventeen Khalwas for the recitation of the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup>

Study in the Khalwah starts at the early age of about six to seven years. At this age the emphasis is laid on memorization of the Qur'ān only. Little is written in at-Tabaqāt about how a Khalwah at its earliest stage operated. From the few references to the activities at the Shaikh's centres it is clear that the children memorizing the Qur'ān were included as part of the whole programme at the centre.<sup>2</sup> What is made clear is that they used slates 'alwāh' on which they wrote the section to memorize. After memorization they rewrote it for the Shaikh to correct.

Connected also with the religious activity which influenced society at this early stage was adult education. This consisted of the study of Tawhīd, Sharī'a, 'Ilm al-'Aqā'id 'dogmatic theology', 'Ilm al-Farā'id 'concerned with the laws of inheritance' grammar and philology. There was also a considerable interest in the sciences of the Qur'ān such as 'tajwīd', the correct reading of the Qur'ān. Another main branch of studies which seemed to be preferred by most of the people was 'akhd tariq al-qawm', Sufism.

The introduction of these studies was accompanied by the inflow of a large number of books and an interest by the people in acquiring private libraries, like Shaikh 'Abd ar-Rahmān b. Sālih b. Ban-Naqa and many

1. Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allan, p.544.

2. " " " " , p.280.

others.<sup>1</sup> The influence of this activity is also reflected in the considerable number of studies made by some of the Sudanese. The main output was limited to writing commentaries 'shurūh' and synopses 'hawāshī', for some of the books brought into the Sudan. The only original attempt was the book on theology written by Shaikh Arbāb al-Khashin. There also appeared a number of Shaikhs who became experts in some of the studies mentioned. For example Shaikh Arbāb al-Khashin who was a master in Tawhid, 'Abd Allah al-Aghbash in Qur'ānic studies and Ibrāhīm b. 'Ubūdī al-Faradī who was called so because he was an expert in 'Ilm al-Farā'id.

These studies were introduced by Sufis and were taught together with Sufism. Many Shaikhs were referred to as acquainted with 'ilm az-Zāhir and al-Bātin' exoteric and esoteric knowledge. But it seems that in spite of the variety of this educational movement, the interest was directed mostly towards Sufism. This is apparent in the large number of the Sufi Shaikhs who emerged at that time.

The predominance of Sufism on the religious life of the people at this early stage is due to one major factor and that was the nature of the society in which it operated. Sudanese society at that time may be described as a stable and static society. The people depended mostly on pastoral activity and seasonal plantations irrigated by the rainfall. There were no big cities or schools and the people led a simple unsecularized type of life. Politically at that time the Sudan was a scene of many political changes, as was shown previously in this study. These passed by without inflicting drastic effects upon the society as a whole. This

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1. *Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allah*, pp. 259, 89, 348, 182.

is due to the fact that the rulers have no absolute control over the economic and social fields. In fact people paid taxes and suffered many sorts of injustice from their rulers as is shown in *at-Tabaqāt*, yet this changed nothing of the static society that existed. It was the human and the geographical environment that determined the nature of the society. The people were simple and their minds were free from the troubles of the striving and conflict suffered by those living in a modern society.

Sufism as the simplest of the religious studies introduced appealed strongly to the masses, to the extent that their religion was focused on it. The most attractive element in Sufism which affected strongly the religious life in the Sudan was the Shaikh's *barakah* 'grace' whereby they performed miracles, '*karamah*'. This element also accounted for the influence of the saint-cult which developed at an early stage.

The effect of these miracles was produced by the wide range they covered, a range which was exactly within the limits of the masses' needs. This included healing the sick, unveiling of the unknown and even restoring the dead to life. Because of these powers the Shaikhs were venerated, a thing which was transmitted to their posterity and *khalīfas* as the inheritors of these powers.

The Shaikh became the focus of the religious life of the individual. He was the teacher, counsellor and a protector offering help and comfort in all sorts of evil and distress. In return he received gifts and presents known as '*ziyarah*'; not a visit, but referring to the gift taken on that visit to the Shaikh. This offered the Fakis a means for earning their living depending mostly on their religious influence.

Unfortunately this opened the profession of faki to abuse. The imposters might not be Sufis, but like them they could read and write the



Qur'ān. Their speciality was to provide charms for protection against evil in the form of 'hijbāt' veils to be worn by people. These consist of papers containing Qur'ānic verses, put into small leather cases and worn on the head, neck or hands. These imposters were also referred to in all cases of misfortune, and their influence upon the people prevails especially in villages. Some of them are West African in origin and are even more famous than the Sudanese imposters.

Another religious influence was that the Sufis mediated to the people their concept of the inner aspect of Islam. When converted to Islam the Sudanese became acquainted only with the fundamental five pillars of Islam - faith in one God, saying the five prayers, fasting, alms-giving and pilgrimage. The esoteric knowledge of the Sufis came to the Sudanese since the very beginning of the introduction of Sufism.

In a controversy between Judge Dushain and Shaikh Muhammed al-Hamīm over the latter's marriage, al-Hamīm answered him by a poem. In it he told the judge that the madhhab 'sunni juridical school' the judge belonged to was used by the Sufis only in limited cases, and he was not going to explain to him the Sufis' madhhab for he would not be able to comprehend it.<sup>1</sup>

Dafa'Allah b. Muhammed b. Abu Idrīs was teaching a group of women among whom was his daughter. She said to him: "You and my brother kept teaching us from Sharī'ah books, while others like the sons of 'Abd as-Sādiq performed miracles."<sup>2</sup> This shows to what extent the Sufi teachings fascinated the people. This also shows that women were also offered a chance to improve their religious knowledge. Sufism also intensified the

1. Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allah, p.320.

2. " " " " , p.317.

misplaced ←

the reason was that during the Turko-Egyptian rule and after the Mahdi's revolution certain waves of migrations had changed the tribal groupings. In every village in this area the inhabitants were a mixture of various tribes.<sup>1</sup>

However the reason for the weakness of this system in this particular area may be attributed to elements which influenced the area earlier than the two mentioned historical events. That was the influence of the Sufi Shaikhs. Many villages were essentially established by them. Examples of Shaikhs' villages were referred to previously. The Shaikhs' followers were not limited to a certain geographical region, nor was following a Shaikh the privilege of a certain race. In many cases in at-Tabaqāt it was mentioned that a Shaikh's followers came from different parts of the country.<sup>2</sup> There is no reference to disagreements or any sort of troubles between them. The Shaikhs did not discriminate between followers who belonged to different tribes.

The result was a modification or even a change in the social conception of the followers. Their concept of tribal fanaticism was supplanted by a new one of communal organization experienced in the Shaikhs' centres. Even the sense of competition they exercised within their tribes over land ownership or pastures had no effect on their new way of life. It was only in one or two cases that it was mentioned that two sects of the followers of a certain Shaikh had competed in reciting what they had written on their slates.<sup>3</sup>

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1. J.S. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.19.

2. Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allah, pp.100, 174, 197.

3. Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allah, p.80.

people's religious practice. In addition to the ritual prayers there were the dhikr, majālis al-dhikr 'invocation gatherings' and the litanies.

In addition to the religious influence Sufism also had a social influence on the Sudan at that early stage. The social power of the Shaikh was reflected in the large number of followers he gathered around him. Social differences, though not fully crystalized at this early stage, were dissolved by the religious bond which united the people. The occupation of the people with religious duties enlarged social activity. The Shaikhs formed the social services department which did not exist at that time. With their miracle-performing capacities they were more trusted and depended upon. They provided for the needy and offered their medical services; and what they got in return was employed to keep these services operating. The Shaikh's influence was not limited to his followers but covered the whole community in which he lived.

The most significant social aspect by which Sufism had influenced the Sudan at the early stage was the establishment of many permanent settlements. This is particularly reflected in the central region of the country, the area around the Blue and the White Niles, where many villages bearing Shaikhs' names had emerged. The power behind the survival of these villages was the Shaikhs' tombs 'qubas' which continued to serve as sources of grace for the settlers.

The tribal organization was the dominant social system in the Sudan. As was mentioned earlier this was brought by the Arab immigrants who settled in the country and retained their original system and customs. Their social system had affected the original inhabitants either through intermarriage or through an alliance enforced by certain circumstances.

This tribal organization used to be weak or non-existent among the villagers in the area mentioned above. According to J.S. Trimmingham

The Shaikhs' fame also had eroded that of the chiefs of the tribes. A Sufi Shaikh who combined the functions of mediation in religious, political and social affairs overlapped the duties of the tribal chief.

Another aspect which was manifested at this early stage was the political influence Sufism had on the Sudan. The Sufis were not only venerated by the masses, but also by the Funj Sultans. In fact it was the rulers who encouraged them to come and settle in the Sudan. They were given plots of land to establish centres for themselves and their followers.<sup>1</sup> The rulers also believed strongly in them to the extent that they used to consult them in political matters. For example Shaikh 'Ajīb of the Arab tribes consulted Shaikh Idrīs b. al-Arbāb whether to fight the Funj or not. Shaikh Idrīs warned him not to fight them for whatever the situation he was going to be killed and his throne inherited by them. This was said to have come true.<sup>2</sup> Another example was that of one of the Funj kings. His armies revolted against him and killed all his supporters. He took refuge in his sister's house and the latter went to Shaikh Khalīl b-al-Rūmī to intervene and save her brother. Shaikh Khalīl told her that her brother was sinful and unjust and deserved no help. She brought her brother disguised as a lady to repent before the Shaikh. He repented and through Shaikh Khalīl's miracle he was able to conquer his enemies with only a small army.<sup>3</sup>

Realizing their effect, the people used to take refuge in the Shaikhs' centres whenever in trouble with their leaders. Most of the

1. Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allah, p.234, 244, 373.

2. " " " " , p.63.

3. " " " " , p.203.

Shaikhs in at-Tabaqāt used to mediate between the people and the government. This was referred to as 'shafā'ah' i.e. clemency or pardoning for a convict. This 'shafā'ah was never rejected by the rulers. Shaikh Khojalī b. 'Abd al-Rahman used to send with the convict a piece of clay for he had no 'shafā'ah.<sup>1</sup>

From both the aspects of political influence it is clear that leadership and authority were largely influenced by the Shaikhs. It should be stated that in spite of this strong influence the Shaikhs did not show any tendency to direct involvement in politics. No Shaikh attempted to annexe the throne of a king and rule himself, nor even support one against another. The political troubles which occurred were ignored, and the Shaikhs contributed only by giving advice when they were consulted.

To sum up, at its early stage between A.D.1500-1800, Sufism had greatly influenced the Sudan religiously, socially and politically. It provided the most significant medium of instruction in every aspect that concerned the society.

The changes which took place in the 19th century affected the impact Sufism had on the Sudan. These changes were largely due to the external influences which had started to enter the Sudan since the beginning of the 19th century.

The first signs of external influence started with the invasion of the Sudan by the Turkish rulers of Egypt in 1820. Their main interest in the Sudan was the exploitation of the countries' resources, such as slaves, ivory and gold.<sup>2</sup> During this period which lasted for about sixty years there were no significant social, cultural or political changes.

1. Tabaqāt Ibn Dayf Allah, p.193.

2. Hasan Ahmad Mahmūd, al-Islam wa'l thaqafa al-'Arabiyya fī Afriqiya, Part I, p.197.

The Turks led the country from one crisis to another until the people united by al-Mahdi's call revolted and freed themselves. It was only in education that slight changes were manifested. A few schools were opened and a considerable number of Sudanese were given the chance of studying in Egypt. That was the country's first contact with modern education. The success of al-Mahdī brought a glimpse of hope for the people, but his unexpected death and the failure of his Khalīfah to carry on with his mission led to the invasion of the Sudan by the British and the Egyptians in 1896, the result of which, in 1898, was a new political creation called the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

This was the turning point, not only in the religious but also the social, political and cultural history of the Sudan. It would be better to discuss first the changes which took place in this period, and then consider their effect upon the Sufi organizations.

The essential policy of the Condominium was to place the responsibility of the administration in the hands of the British owing to the Egyptians' failure during the Turkish rule.<sup>1</sup> This was the crucial decision which had determined the nature of the country's future. The once stable, static, simple and religiously orientated society was placed at the mercy of an administrator whose beliefs and ideals had passed through drastic social and cultural changes, and whose view of life was completely secular. The British whose mental and psychological background could not be adapted into the Sudanese context would not be convinced that the welfare of the country depended upon elements other than westernization.

So the main stress was laid upon material and intellectual development, the two elements upon which the Western world had crawled towards the

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1. J.S. Trimmingham, *Islam in the Sudan*, p.97.

brighter future they thought it was. This attitude also provided an anti-climax for the acting religious forces, namely the Sufi organizations.

The first step towards the secularization of the society was in the field of education. This was once a preserve of the Sufis and was purely a religious education. During the condominium many elementary and a few secondary schools were established and in 1945 Gordon College was established as the highest unit of education.

The expansion of the new system of education had gradually undermined the old religious system, and the Khalwa's importance as the central unit of education diminished. This change in education was followed by many aspects of social change. The new system of education had produced a new class of learned people who were mainly employed in government offices. The growth of towns also led many people to migrate from their original places and settle in the towns, satisfied with whatever sort of job they found. The modernization of the means of transport, together with other mediums of information like the Press and Radio, brought the scattered tribal units into contact with the new changes in the society. So the people who were once living in nearly the same static social and economical life were brought under the influence of these changes, and the Sudan gradually started to pass into the stage of social differentiation.

The corrosive effect of this social upheaval together with westernization, had affected the influence of Sufism both at its early stage and that of organized *tā'ifas*.

As regards its effect upon the earlier stage, it had completely undermined the fame and influence of the 'Fakī' and pushed him into the background. Many of the services the 'Fakī' used to provide for the masses were replaced by modern ones. The new system of education and the other social services provided alternatives for most, if not for all the people.

Before the 19th century the 'ulamā' and the Sufis were the same, for the Sufis were considered, as in at-Tabaqāt, as masters of both esoteric and exoteric knowledge. During the Turkish rule many Sudanese were given the chance of going to Egypt in order to study in al-Azhar Mosque. They were employed as teachers of Arabic and Religion in schools, while some of them ran the religious courts 'mahākim shar'iyya'.<sup>1</sup> They were essentially responsible for problems relating to the family like marriage, divorce, inheritance and certain sorts of disputes.

The authority and social importance gained by this group was due to the strong link with society they established through performing these duties. Yet it seems that the crystalizing element which gave the 'ulamā' in the Sudan their status was the introduction of the titles 'Shaikh of Islam and Shaikh of the 'Ulamā' by the Turkish rulers. The first to be awarded both the titles was Shaikh Muḥammad al-Badawī al-Tijānī.<sup>2</sup> The judges were also headed by the grand judge 'qāḍī al-quḍāt' and the Muftī 'adviser'. Such organization resulted in the creation of the class of 'Ulamā'.

Although the influence of the 'Ulamā' was limited to the towns only, yet their emergence had to some extent undermined the status of the 'Fakis'. The expansion of the system of the religious courts had subordinated the Fakis both as a religious authority and arbitrator in all sorts of social problems.

The climax of the subordination of the 'Fakis' came with the introduction of the organized Sufi ṭā'ifas in the 19th century. By the

1. Hasan Ahmed Mahmūd, al-Islam wa'l Thaqafa al-'Arabiyya fī Ifrīqiya, p.393.

2. Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Tijānī, Tarīqal-Haqq, 9th edition 1969, p.22.



beginning of the 19th century the only organized *tā'ifa* in operation was the *Qādiriyya*. Then followed the introduction of the *Tijāniyya* and the *Khatmiyya* in the way previously discussed.

The *tā'ifas* continued to influence the Sudan in the same way as the earlier scattered shaikhs. They undertook educational responsibility, and their centres were more organized. The *Khalwah* continued as the only significant medium of education. A slight development affected the *Khalwah* at this stage. Instead of being part of the main centre's activity, separate *khalwahs* were established in many villages and so became local schools. The shaikh or 'faki' in charge of the *khalwah* belonged to the category of 'shaikh al-qirā'at' appointed by a Sufi shaikh. The nature of this occupation was formerly discussed in relation to the organization of the *tā'ifas*.

The same process of the saint-cult was applied to the shaikhs of the *tā'ifas*. When these *tā'ifas* were strongly established the religious influence of Sufism took another direction. The religious circle started to have recognized boundaries, brought into effect by the existence of *tā'ifas* who belonged to different founders. The belief in Sufism moved from unity to separation. At first all the 'fakis' were the same, belonging to the same status of sainthood and differed only in so far as their miracles differed. With the introduction of the organized *tā'ifas* the people's response was eventually organized. Each *tā'ifa* accumulated its own followers. The fact that the follower should submit himself to his shaikh and should never contact another, strongly established the boundaries between the *tā'ifas*.

The masses adopted the Sufi rules concerning only the initiates and affiliates, and applied them to their own needs. The fact that if a *murīd* contacted any shaikh other than his he wouldn't benefit from either,

was applied to many beliefs which developed at the early stage of Sufism. It came to be thought that any shaikh other than the one you believed in wouldn't be able to heal your sickness however miraculous he was. So the 'fakī' who used to be a general practitioner was replaced by a specialist. The founder of a *tā'ifah* became 'Shaikh al-'aqīdah, belief', whose influence was limited to his followers only, and whose followers wouldn't be influenced by any other shaikh. In the social and political spheres the *tā'ifas* continued to influence society in the same way as the earlier shaikhs.

The religious, social and political influence of Sufism in the Sudan started to break up as early as the Mahdi's revolution. Al-Mahdi's policy was to unite all the Sudanese under the leadership of one religious leader and that was himself. This was made necessary by the nature of his mission previously discussed.

Al-Mahdi's relation with the *tā'ifas* was hostile. He disobeyed his own Qādiriyya shaikh, Shaikh Muḥammad al-Qurashī, and forsook him for another. The only *tā'ifa* which supported him was al-Majdhūbiyya. His military success was the vital factor in attracting the masses who were once the supporters of the *tā'ifas*, and thus he became a threat for their fame and authority. The Khatmiyya, led by Muḥammad 'Uthmān Taj al-Sir opposed him and their leader was forced to escape for safety to Egypt, where he died in 1886.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of the Mahdiyya period was a stagnation in the *tā'ifas'* activity. This was because the *tā'ifas'* leaders either supported al-Mahdī and thus lost their authority, or fled the country.

The failure of al-Mahdi's revolution and the reoccupation of the Sudan

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1. J.S. Trimmingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.233.

by the British and the Egyptians, marked a new era in the history of Sufism in the Sudan. The son of the above-mentioned, Muhammad 'Uthmān Tājal-Sir, called 'Alī and his brother Ahmed returned from Egypt, their refuge during the Mahdiyya. Ahmed stayed in Kassala town where he started reorganizing the Khatmiyya tā'ifah. 'Alī was awarded the title 'Sir' as an acknowledgement of his family's resistance to al-Mahdī, and their support for the government.<sup>1</sup> 'Alī stayed in Khartoum and with the help of the Condominium government started the reorganization of the tā'ifah in that area.

A son of al-Mahdī, Sayyed 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Mahdī, who was a British prisoner in Egypt was given amnesty and returned home. He was later given the title 'Sir' as well. 'Abd al-Rahmān reorganized the followers of al-Mahdī in a way similar to the Sufi tā'ifas and they emerged as a strong and influential organization.

Supported by the government, both the Khatmiyya and the Mahdi's followers 'Ansār' expanded at the expense of the other tā'ifas and became the most influential religious organizations.

The formerly discussed changes brought about by the gradual processes of westernization and modernization, stripped nearly all the tā'ifas of their educational and authoritative significance. The small tā'ifas like the Qādiriyya and the Tijāniyya were content to survive as family tā'ifas. As regards the two major tā'ifas of the Khatmiyya and the Ansār, it seemed that the political sphere proved more attractive to their leaders.

The major factor which finally reduced the influence of those leaders to politics was the growing national movement which started before

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1. J.S. Trimingham, *Islam in the Sudan*, p.234.

independence. They became involved in politics in the modern sense, and the main interest was the freedom of the Sudan to be governed by the Sudanese. The religious element seemed to be excluded, since the religious activity in these *tā'ifas* was left to leaders who were not involved in politics.

The details of the *tā'ifas*' political activities since independence in 1956 up to the present time cannot be contained within such a limited survey of the aspects of Sufism in the Sudan. But it should be stressed that the *tā'ifas* created no religious ideology upon which to undertake their political responsibility. There was no intention to establish a religious state, after independence.

What concerns this study is the set-backs this political involvement had inflicted on the *tā'ifas* as essentially religious organizations. The 20th century party-politics linked the *tā'ifas* to the process of government activity. Eventually the interest of the followers of the religious organization was turned towards politics and their main interest was the triumph of their leaders as politicians. Consequently the traditional role of the *tā'ifas* was disrupted and their trend secularized.

In the towns the leaders were pre-occupied with their political activity while religious duties were ignored, and left to sectional leaders to supervise. The image of the leader as a religious personality began to be eroded by his image as a politician. Large numbers of supporters were recruited only for political purposes and the spiritual education of the individual diminished in importance.

In addition to politics the influence of Sufism was also affected by a movement known as '*Jamā'at ansār al-Sunna*', supporters of the Prophet's traditions, which started in the second half of the 20th century. This organization seemed to be influenced by the *Wahābī* reformatory movement

which took place in Arabia at the beginning of the 19th century. This organization was mainly concerned with advocating 'tawhīd' i.e. the acknowledgement of Divine Unity and the denial of all causes other than the One. They considered the saint-cult manifested in revering the saints' tombs, invoking their names and dependence upon them in everything as heretical. This movement was at first opposed and rejected by the people, but recently they have acquired considerable support. Although not large in number they are very active in preaching, especially during religious festivals, like the Prophet's Birthday celebrations, and in the mosques.

The 20th century Sudan is to a considerable extent a secularized society. All the changes that took place have emphasised the discrepancies between the tā'ifas as traditionally religious organizations, and the transformed society. Even the most influential tā'ifas were affected and their influence reduced.

In such a situation the crucial question is: has Sufism any future in the Sudan? It would be unwise in answering this question to underestimate the potential of all the tā'ifas considering what has been explained above, for the triumph of any religious appeal depends upon factors within its own environment. In the case of the Khatmiyya and the Ansar - though the latter are not specifically Sufis except in certain aspects - it could be said that in their present situation their long-term prospect is that they shall no longer be recognized as a religious organization. This is because these two tā'ifas have undergone such changes that they are operating mainly as political organizations.

As regards the Ansār the internal conflict within the tā'ifa contributed mostly to its diminishing role. This tā'ifa was very strong until the death of its leader Siddīq al-Mahdī in 1961. By his death the

leadership was split between his son Sādiq and the latter's uncle al-Hādī, Sādiq being the political leader while al-Hādī was the 'Imām' religious leader. There was much conflict between the two. The martyrdom of al-Hādī in the Abā crisis in April 1970 has left the party, up to now, without a religious leader. So the survival of the Ansār as a religious organization depends on their reconstruction and reorganization on a religious basis.

The future is not so hopeless for the comparatively smaller tā'ifas like the Qādiriyya and the Tijāniyya, for these remained unaffected by the changes that took place and continued to operate as family tā'ifas. The indifferent attitude of these tā'ifas towards the transformed society has affected their status.

There are certain conditions which determine the survival and success of any tā'ifa in a modern society. These are:

- 1 - The tā'ifa should start, through self-criticism a process of reconstruction and reorganization. Instead of a complete withdrawal from modernized society it should meet its challenge, and consider the changes as an impetus to reformation and energetic activity among the people.
- 2 - A tā'ifa should recognize that the time has passed when affiliation to it was an automatic process. It should renew itself continuously through recruitment. Its leader and members should preach its doctrines and beliefs outside the boundaries of the centre.
- 3 - A tā'ifa should lay a strong emphasis on the quality not the quantity of the followers.
- 4 - If a tā'ifa gets involved in politics, it should never separate its religious essence from its political career.

- 5 - The tā'ifah should have a good understanding of the nature of the society in which it operates.

As regards the last condition the process of modernization and secularization of the Sudan had developed three different reactions. The first is that of those who accept from the materially and intellectually orientated life not its essence but its form. As a result they preserve their moral nature and religious upbringing. The second is that of those who, through their failure to co-ordinate their moral nature with the intellectual life, the two concepts get distorted in them and so they have lost their integrity of character. The third reaction is that of those who think that it is only through departure from their religious and moral nature that they can benefit from the new ways of life. The last group is the most dangerous and it is among them that anti-religious attitudes develop.

The contraction of Sufi influence in the religious, social and political spheres had left a vacuum which was later occupied by new Islamic organizations. 'Jama'at ansār al-Sunna' which was mentioned earlier was one of these organizations. But the most significant movement was that of the Moslem Brotherhood which was founded in the Sudan in the second half of the 20th century.

This movement originated in Egypt and it was founded by Hasan al-Banna in 1927. The nature of this movement is revealed in its founder's definition that it was "a Salafite movement, an orthodox way, a Sufi reality, a political body, an athletic group, a scientific and cultural society, based on an economic and a social idea."<sup>1</sup>

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1. I.M.al-Husainī, The Moslem Brethren, p.15.

This organization was influenced by Sufism because its founder was an affiliate of the Ḥasāfiyya order in Egypt. The principle of this organization was the stressing of the integrity and perfection of Islam. From this followed their belief in the identification of the state with religion and the casting of every social, political, economic and scientific aspect in religious terms. Like the Sufis they laid great importance on the spiritual upbringing of the individual, and they considered the 'dhikr' an essential element in achieving this.<sup>1</sup>

Their activity in the Sudan started around the year 1946. Its base was a local religious movement whose objective was the advocacy of Islam, and the opposition of immoral behaviour, particularly in schools. Later on, through contacts with the Egyptian organization, they adopted the Moslem Brotherhood's principles.<sup>2</sup>

The Moslem Brotherhood's influence is very strong among the educated youths, and weaker among the masses. This is a major difference from the organization in Egypt which was so popular among the masses.

As for the future of Sufism among such organizations, it is undeniable that it has affected the Sudanese life in every aspect for centuries. Its influence is interwoven with the character and psychology of the individual. However, it seems that no tā'ifa shall be able to embrace a vast number of supporters as in the past. The tā'ifas shall be restricted to those who choose to become Sufis and who favour spiritual experience, rather than inheriting it as a family tradition.

1. Ḥasan al-Banna, al-Ma'thūrāt, pp.5-7.

2. I.M.al-Husaini, The Moslem Brethren, p.82.



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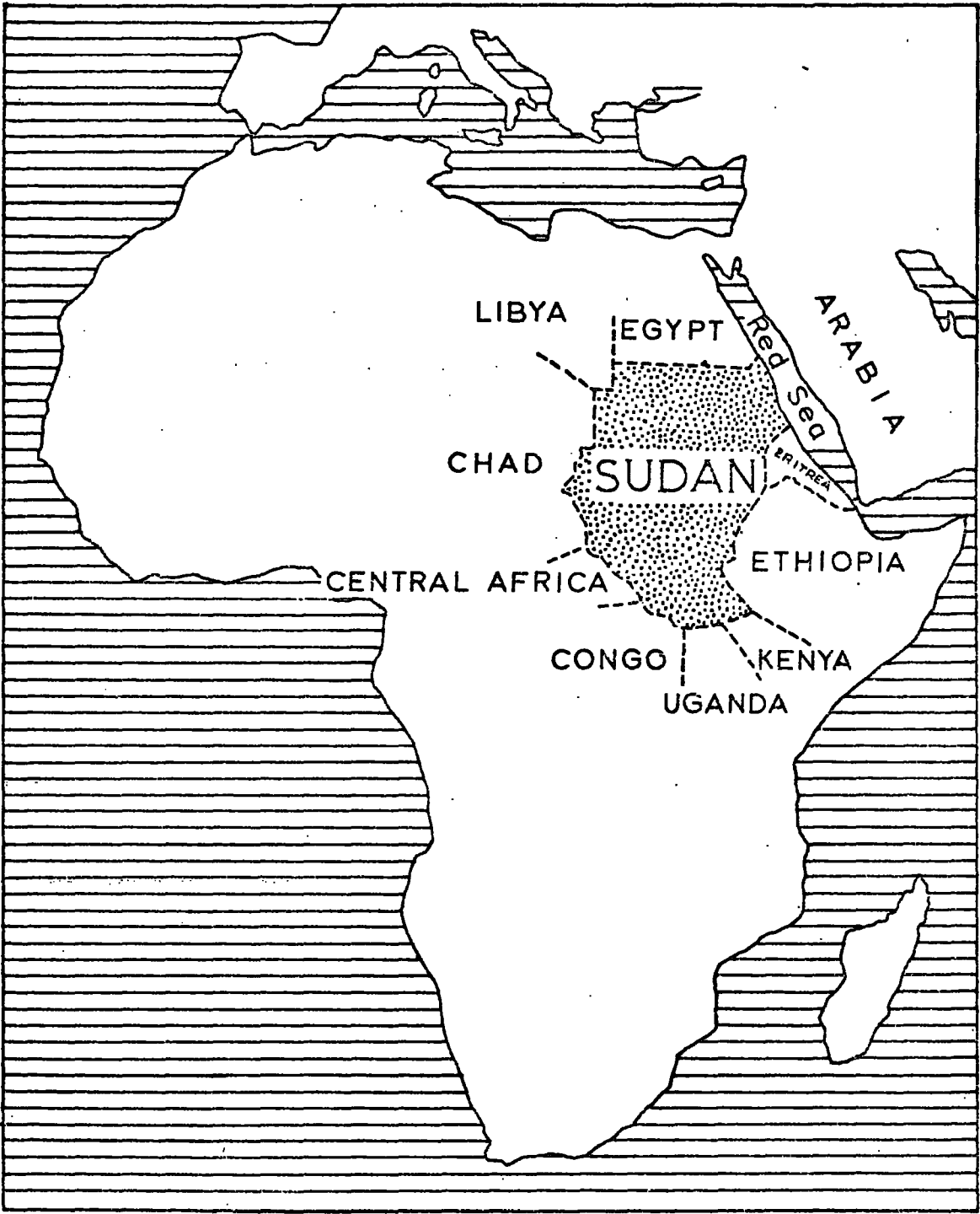
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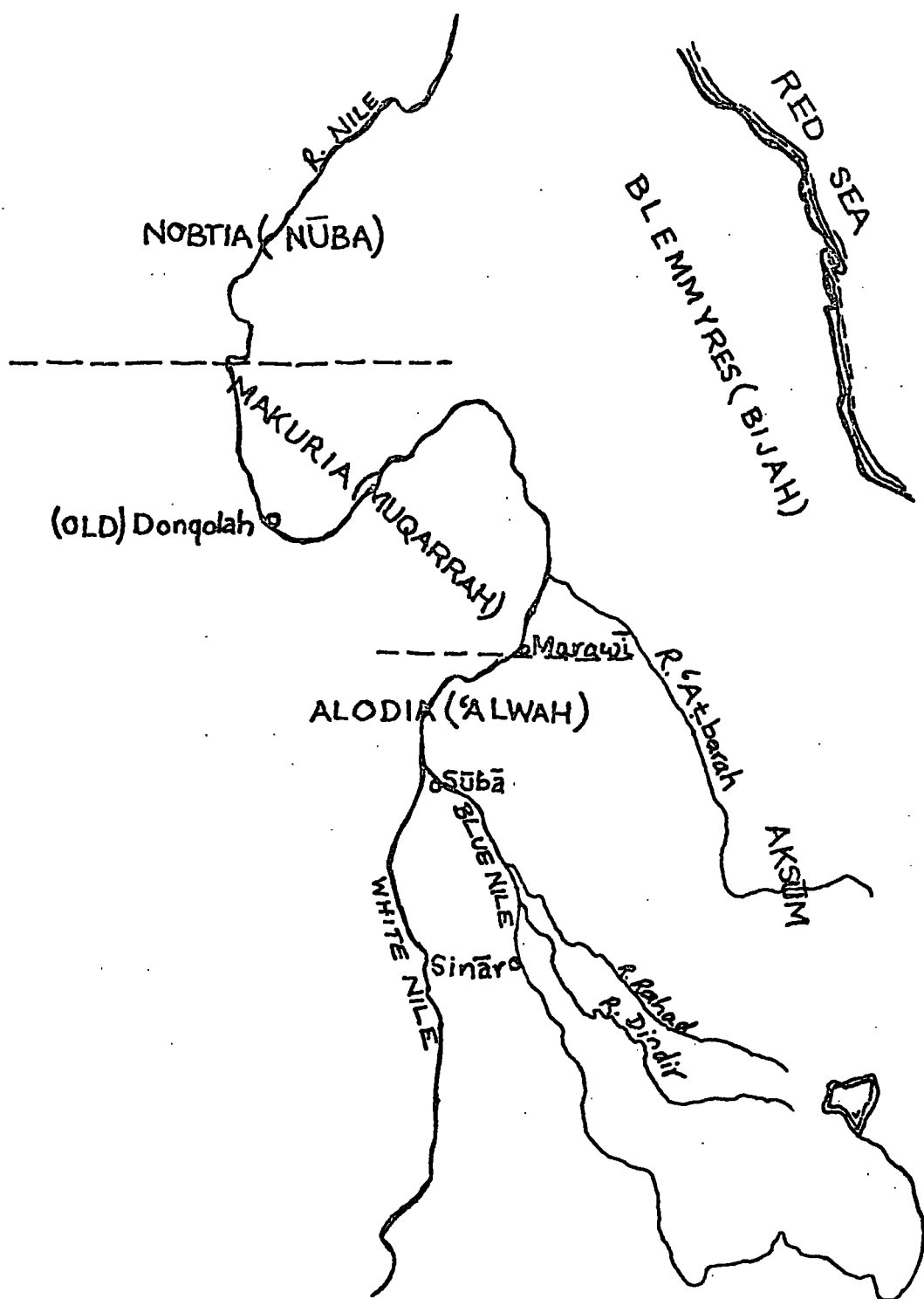
Index of Arabic words

ādāb:	Manners, the rules regulating the behaviour and conduct of the Sufi in relation to his shaikh and his fellow Sufis.
awrād:	Litanies, a collection of remembrance 'dhikr' formulae.
bai'ah:	Vow of allegiance.
baqā':	Abiding (in God).
barakah:	Holiness, spiritual power.
bātin:	interior; of the esoteric.
bid'ah:	A blameworthy innovation.
darwīsh:	dervish
dhikr:	Recollection or remembrance; the invocation of God's names by different methods as a spiritual exercise.
faid:	Emanation of divine grace.
fanā':	Passing away, transmutation of self, a stage in the Sufi path.
faqīh:	Jurisconsult, one trained in Religious Law.
faqīr:	A poor one (in need for God), a general term for a Sufi.
fiqh:	Religious law.
ghaflah:	Negligence. In Sufi sense: preoccupation with the self and the worldly life.
ḥadrah:	a Sufi gathering for dhikr.
ḥalqah:	Circle of dhikr.
i'tiqād:	Lit. belief, bond of allegiance to a shaikh.
karamah:	Grace.
khalwah:	Seclusion.
madad:	(supernatural) help.
madhhab:	a school of thought.
ma'rifah:	Mystical knowledge.
mujāhadah:	Striving along the Sufi path.
qawm:	Folk. In Sufi usage means the Sufis.
qiblah:	The direction for a moslem during ritual prayers.
quṭb:	Axis, head of the heirarchy of awliyā'.
rātib:	A fixed office prescribed by a shaikh to his followers.
sūfī:	A Moslem mystic.

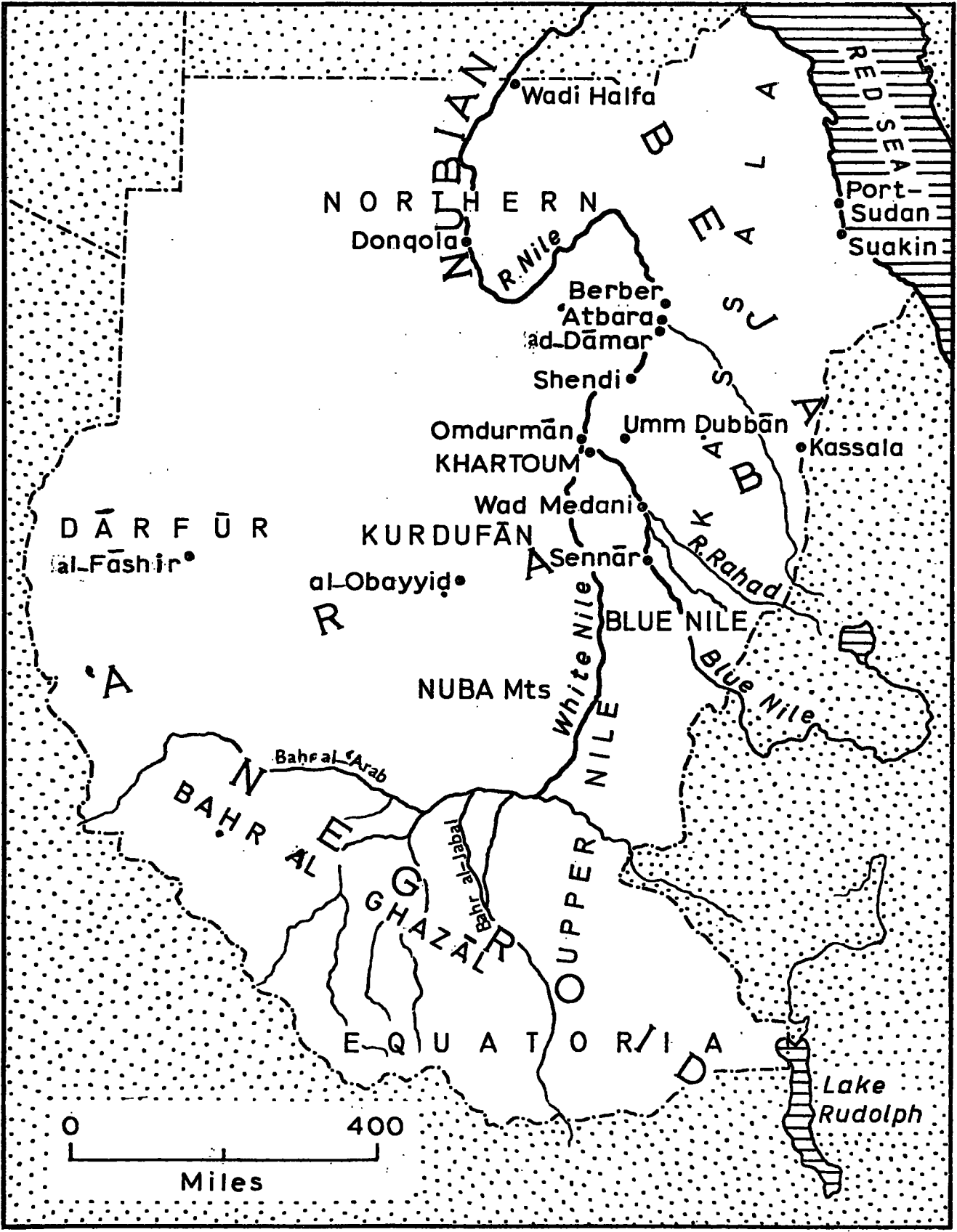
ṭā'ifah:	Organization; a Sufi group.
ṭarīqah:	The Sufi path.
tawbāh:	Repentance.
walī:	A 'protégé' of God, a saint.
wilāyah:	saintship.
zāhirī:	Exoteric.
ziyārah:	Visitation to a saint's tomb.
zuhd:	Renunciation.



Map 1. Geographical position of the Sudan.



Map 2: The Christian Kingdoms of the Sudan



Map 3: Regions and Ethnic groups